

**Peter Burke, Ronnie Po-chia Hsia, eds..** *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. 252 pp. \$101.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-521-86208-0.



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Cultural translation, as this book argues in a series of essays, concerns the translation of languages as well as the simultaneous translation and creation of new cultural, social, religious, and political concepts. Through a focus on specifically textual translation, the book makes a substantial contribution to the broader issue of situating translation within cultural history. It is co-edited by Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia, two eminent and innovative cultural historians of the early modern world. This book of English-language essays addresses publications that appeared in a wide range of languages. The editors take an equally broad approach to the meaning and scope of the act of translation. The publication of this collection of essays was supported by the European Science Foundation and grew out of a series of symposia supported by the same organization. This background is reflected in its focus on non-literary, and particularly scientific texts, and in its wide linguistic and geographical scope--Hsia's own study incorporates China, and other essays

also venture beyond modern-day European borders.

The collection evidently follows Peter Burke's particular interest in what he has characterized as the social history of languages. In *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (2004), Burke explored textual and written languages in Europe, the varied uses of Latin as well as many vernacular languages, and their phases of relative ascendancy as well as cross-fertilization. This current collection of essays focuses on the more specific issue of textual translation, and naturally lacks the cohesiveness of a single-author study as well as the consistent conceptual and stylistic clarity that is the hallmark of Burke's work. But it provides a stimulating range of approaches to the issue of translation, including--in an unusually high number of individual contributions to an edited book--three particularly thought-provoking essays by Burke himself. The collection suffers from the common problem of edited collection--contributions that vary in scope and quality--and this matter is somewhat exacerbated by the very

different word lengths of some contributions. With a focus on printed publications, some essays can read like very erudite annotated bibliographies, but nonetheless, most use this material to make larger assessments and claims about the cultural and social meaning and purpose of translation.

A short introduction by the two editors outlines the scope of the collection, and situates the study in disciplinary terms, particularly in connection to the separate discipline area known as "translation studies." Peter Burke then provides a longer and essentially introductory essay that will be of particular value to scholars and students seeking a clear exposition of translation as an aspect of social, cultural, and intellectual history. After some brief but useful orienting comments on the anthropological aspect of cultural translation, Burke examines the profession, status, and to some extent the activity of the translator—sometimes a professional, but more likely an amateur or a person involved in several related professions. He explores a number of the issues that translators grappled with: should translations be literal, free-ranging, or even amplifications of the original text? Did certain texts—particularly religious texts, including but not restricted to the Bible—demand a particular faithfulness to the original word? The following essay, by Hsia, focuses on Jesuit missions into China and provides a fascinating example of cross-cultural exchange as well as many details on the program of translation, with a focus on European texts translated into Chinese rather than vice versa. Hsia provides a sense of the extent to which translation could involve paraphrasing, compiling, and editing—effectively creating new works as part of the process of translation. While the majority of texts were religious works, Hsia emphasizes that translation of the Bible was not a significant activity (perhaps not unexpectedly given the Catholic environment). Eva Kowalská's essay is also attentive to the particularities of different confessional groups, explaining how critical the Czech lan-

guage—especially biblical Czech—was to Slovak Lutheran identity in the early modern period, providing a Hussite lineage for this Lutheran community.

Burke returns again with a detailed survey of translations from the vernacular into Latin (rather than from Latin, the more common area of research for early modernists, particularly those working on the Renaissance program of preparing classical texts for printed editions). This essay, along with one by Carlos M. N. Eire that follows, are useful introductions to their respective topics for non-specialists. The first section of the book is thematically structured as addressing translation and language, while the second is concerned with translation and culture; Burke's and Eire's essays respectively conclude and introduce the crossover point. Eire's very stimulating essay addresses the contours of spiritual literature in publication and translation, moving from the Rhineland to Spain to France, and arguing on the way for more extensive, quantitative bibliographical research on which further studies can be based. Eire also provides one of the few examples in this collection of close textual analysis, noting the broader spiritual and consequently also political implications of translating the verb *inwerken* (relating to inward spiritual experience), as the more passive *inactio* in Spanish. Geoffrey P. Baldwin's essay continues in the survey style of the preceding essays by Burke and Eire with a wide-ranging examination of the translation of political texts across Europe. A further essay by Burke, this time of the translation of histories as a genre, follows. Both Burke and Baldwin provide many interesting examples of the ways in which sensitive political topics could be reshaped through translation for new audiences. Protestant texts could contain new, pointed Catholic elements, and vice versa, as in the version of Francesco Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* (1537-40) translated into Dutch, and, Burke writes, including "an index entry un-

der P, 'Pope squeezes a lot of money out of the Jubilee'" (p. 137).

Although the book has a three-part structure, significant crossover develops between the first and second sections, outlined above. At times, the second section more explicitly raises issues about a broader understanding of cultural translation that moves well beyond the textual and linguistic. Maria Pallares-Burke's essay is the best case in point. It is one of the more unusual in the book in that it very directly positions itself as addressing cultural translation rather than textual translation. This issue is implicit in a number of the essays, but is most explicitly addressed in this very interesting study of the influence of *Spectator*-style journalism in continental Europe (and beyond).

The final third of the collection reflects most directly the aims of the European Science Foundation. It comprises a series of mostly shorter essays on translation and science and tackles publications, including scientific, medical, geographical, and cartographic works--some translated into and out of European languages less frequently addressed by English-speaking scholars. Indeed, in an interesting counterpoint to the dominance of English in much current scholarship (particularly in the sciences), Peter Burke reminds the reader that until the late seventeenth century, English was little known in continental Europe, and not considered a particularly useful language. The section begins with Isabelle Pantin's linguistically mainstream essay focusing on key contemporary medical and scientific figures in primarily British, French, and German contexts, including Ambroise Paré, Paracelsus, and Robert (not William) Boyle, in order to consider the languages in which their works circulated and, in particular, the relative values of Latin and vernacular editions. Latin was certainly the lingua franca of the period, and translations across vernaculars were not common. Nonetheless, Pantin also demonstrates how Latin editions that followed vernacular editions

could reflect the status of the author, even if the vernacular editions might sometimes be more useful and more widely used.

Shifting the focus onto languages and regions less commonly studied in English-language scholarship, Efthymios Nicolaïdis provides a fascinating window onto texts translated into Greek during the early modern period. Much scholarship concerns the translation of ancient texts from Greek into Latin and European vernaculars, but this essay seeks to demonstrate how western Europe scholarship entered contemporary Greek scientific, cultural, and educational milieus as the Byzantine Empire gave way to the Ottoman. Nicolaïdis argues that the prestige of ancient Greek texts played into the discourse of this program of translation, even if substantial scientific or medical advances were not being made in Greek lands at this time. Feza Günergün's very interesting essay on translation of scientific and medical texts into the Turkish language tends to address the importation of concepts, practical techniques, and intellectual ideas into Turkish publications, rather than specific textual translations. The essay distinguishes between the types of texts that were most useful to translate into Turkish--primarily geographical, cartographic, and medical--and those for which existing Arabic versions were more likely to meet the needs of readers and to make Turkish translation less viable or necessary.

The book concludes with a very short essay by S. S. Demidov on scientific translation in early modern Russia. This essay hints at the rich materials available to prospective researchers, describes an influx of new materials into Russia from the sixteenth century, and indicates a shift that saw translators as increasingly likely to belong to some form of bureaucracy. This final third section of essays address publications and linguistic regions that will be less well known to many English-speaking readers, and they offer tantalizing insights into fields of research too little encountered in broader surveys. These studies po-

tentially point towards new and stimulating areas of research and scholarly exchange awaiting those historians who can, themselves, take up the challenges of further language study and translation. In an academic climate in which emerging historians seeking professional positions must increasingly weigh the time and cost of studying languages against the time needed to complete degrees, articles, and books, it is a pleasure to encounter a group of essays that immerses the reader in scholarship on so many different languages.

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