

CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE BIBLIOGRAPHY ON THE HISTORY OF TRANSLATION IN SPAIN¹

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Abstract

This article deals critically and succinctly with the development of the studies on translation history in Spain, starting from counting the bibliographic production (researches, studies, articles, publications, etc.). Given the existing thematic dispersion and the increase that these studies have experienced in the last few decades, this historiographical review highlights the need for a synthesis in future works establishing periods and classification in order to provide a panoramic and practical view to research and theorizing.

Resumen

El artículo aborda de forma crítica y sucinta el recorrido de los estudios sobre historia de la traducción en España, partiendo tanto de los hitos bibliográficos como del recuento de la producción investigadora menor. Ante la dispersión temática existente y el incremento que durante las últimas décadas han experimentado estos estudios, la presente revisión historiográfica pone de manifiesto la necesidad de realizar en futuros trabajos una síntesis periodificadora y clasificadora que pueda ofrecer una perspectiva panorámica y práctica para la investigación y teorización.

Keywords: Translation history. Spain. Bibliography. Historiography. Translation.

Palabras clave: Historia de la traducción. España. Bibliografía. Historiografía. Traducción.

¹ This article is the English version of “Examen crítico de la bibliografía sobre la historia de la traducción en España” by David Pérez Blázquez. It was not published on the print version of MonTI for reasons of space. The online version of MonTI does not suffer from these limitations, and this is our way of promoting plurilingualism.

1. Introduction

It has existed since time immemorial; it has been crucial to the evolution of mankind, pivotal to the dissemination of knowledge all over the world, to the development of trade and science, to starting and stopping wars. And yet translation seems to be consigned –even by those who practice and teach it– to be nothing but an extremely technical, ephemeral, practical activity serving other disciplines deemed more “relevant”. The contribution of translation to the history of mankind should be discreet, but not invisible. It is the same old story, or as Miguel Ángel Vega says quoting Valéry Larbaud in a similar context, a never-ending story: the translator should know the history of translation to “know where he comes from and where he should go so as not to repeat the same mistakes. And so that he believes in what he does, which is bringing together nations and languages” (1994: 14).

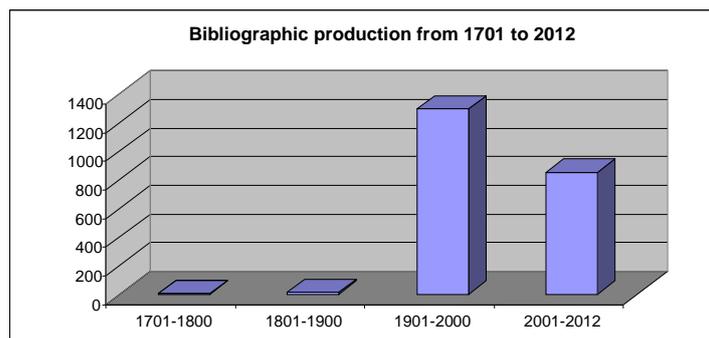
In fact, the history of translation² in Spain has been and will continue to be the unfinished business not only within the knowledge and skills involved in translators’ training, but also in general history. This hackneyed phrase –as it has already been used by Vega, Lafarga or Payás to refer to this problem– started to be used to define the situation of translation history when translation studies became regulated university studies, a regulation which brought about the institutionalization and scientific formalization of the discipline. Back then, in the 80s and 90s, some of the most authoritative figures in the discipline called for the need to write the history of translation: Antoine Berman (1984: 12-13), Valentín García Yebra (1988: 11), José Lambert (1993), Miguel Ángel Vega Cernuda (1994: 19) or Lieven D’Hulst (1994: 13). They argued that making advances in translation history studies would contribute –among other things– to legitimating translation as an independent discipline, consolidating translation studies, initiating novices into translation, promoting greater tolerance between all the different approaches to translation and, in turn, to finding the unity of the discipline.

Not only did it become apparent that writing the history of translation practice and theory was needed, but also different methodological proposals were made to approach this task, such as the ones by Jean Delisle (1996), Brigitte Lépinette (1997), Anthony Pym (1998a), Judith Woodsworth (1998), and Samuel López Alcalá (2001), among others. For each of these authors, the analysis and the approach to translation history should be based on different criteria: for Lépinette, for instance, it should pay attention to socio-cultural, and historical and descriptive issues; for Pym, the focus should be put on translators and their intercultural space; for López Alcalá, it should combine data collection and organization, the analysis and interpretation of such data, and the resulting statistics.

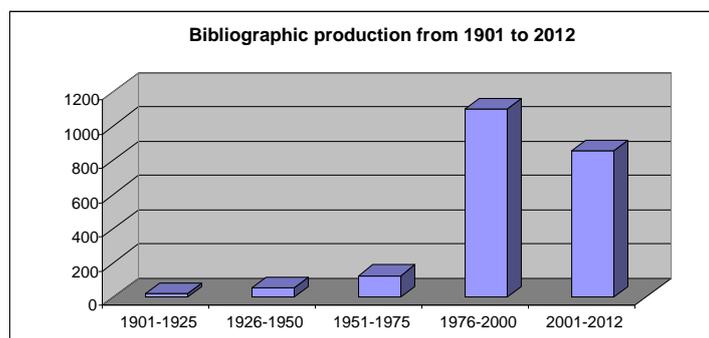
Some decades after that call, this seems to be an opportune time to carry out a qualitative and quantitative assessment of what has been published since then. The resources available in order to measure the historiographical production include the Spanish bibliographic catalogues –already viewed as classics– by Fernando Navarro (1996), Julio César Santoyo (1996) and Carmen Valero (2000). Each of them includes different figures and uses different reference collection criteria. Since 2001, however, the tool known as BITRA (Bibliography of Translation

² Even though there are significant differences between translation history and interpreting history when carrying out their historical reconstruction and historiography tasks, often both disciplines have shared circumstances and scholars studying them. The general use made here of the term *history of translation* includes both the history of the theory and practice of translation and interpreting. The term is used in the same way as in some well-known reference works about the discipline or in the names of university courses on the history of both translation and interpreting (cf. Jean Delisle 2003: 221).

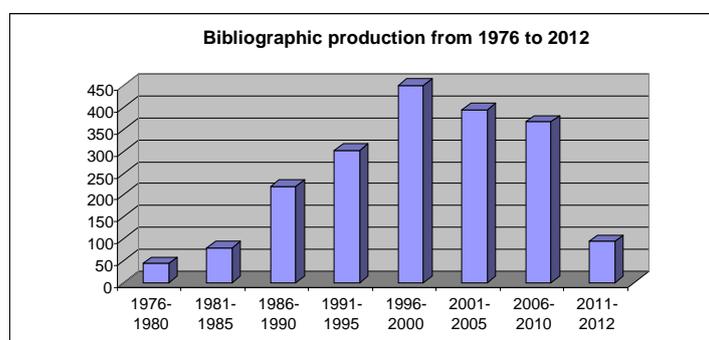
and Interpreting) has also been available to this end. BITRA, created and coordinated by Javier Franco, is probably the most complete database on translation and interpreting bibliography to date. Some of the advantages that BITRA offers to research –besides its more than 53,000 entries and the possibility of performing searches combining different searchable fields, such as year, subject, impact, or document type– lie in the fact that BITRA is an open-access online tool updated on a regular basis. Whatever the resource used, all the catalogues above confirm an already apparent fact: the bloom, or rather, the boom of the research phenomenon in translation history in the 1980s and the undisputed supremacy of monographs over comprehensive works. In order to offer a clearer view of the development of this phenomenon, below is a series of graphs showing the results obtained from BITRA upon searching both “history” and “Spain” in the field “Subject”:



Graph 1. BITRA results from 1701 to 2012



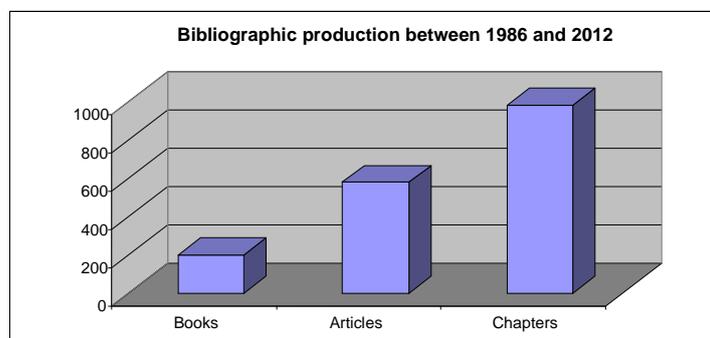
Graph 2. BITRA results from 1901 to 2012



Graph 3. BITRA results from 1976 to 2012

From the point of view of quantity, the current situation of translation history studies in Spain is promising when compared to earlier periods. However, most of these works are chapters and articles published in conference proceedings, journals, monographs, or books, and deal with specific issues and disparate subjects: versions of classic works, reception, or translators and

their work at given times in history, among other topics. This is clearly shown by the number of published works during the years of greatest bibliographic production –between 1986 and 2012–, which vary greatly depending on the document type: books (199), articles (580) or chapters (983):



Graph 4. BITRA results between 1986 and 2012 according to document type

Despite being so large, the research output on the history of translation is disperse and lacks systematization. Nevertheless, within all the historiography of Spanish translation it is possible to go through the most important works in this field in terms of integrative value or groundbreaking nature. Due to space limitations, this review article must necessarily leave out minor works such as the book chapters and journal articles which have contributed so much to the development of historiography in Spain.

2. Historiographical background

When carrying out a review of the bibliography on translation history in Spain, it is surprising to find that, translation being such an ancient activity, its history started to be written only a couple of decades ago; it was not until the paradigm shift took place – in the mid-1980s – that writing the history of translation generated the interest and received the in-depth treatment that it deserves. In the past, religious orders created catalogues of their *scriptores* and, incidentally, of their translations, but they did not do this from a translation perspective, let alone considered translation –its theory, practice and history– as a discipline in its own right. As a result, Father Agustín de Vetancurt’s last part of *Teatro Mexicano* (1697), the well-known “Franciscan Menologium”, is probably the first explicit reference to the work carried out by translators in the Spanish-speaking world. This book includes the names of fifty “distinguished men”, missionary-linguists who, according to Vega (2012), are believed to have written and translated –sometimes in handwriting, other times in printed form– linguistic, liturgical and pastoral works to Popolocan, Otomi, Matlatzinca and Nahuatl languages.

It is also worth highlighting the compiling effort made by the Valencian priest Josef Joaquín de Lorga, who died in 1769 while still collecting materials for his *Bibliotheca de traductores españoles*, which would never see the light. Some of the notes he made were later used by Juan Antonio Pellicer y Saforcada in his well-known work. However, the praiseworthy attempt made by Pellicer in his *Ensayo de una bibliotheca de traductores españoles* (1778) was only that: an attempt. It was Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo who turned this attempt into a reality with his *Bibliotheca de traductores españoles* (1874-1878), an ambitious piece of work with which he aimed at addressing a shortcoming, as he explains in *Horacio en España* (1877: 37): “It grieved me that our literature still lacked a *Catalogue of Translators* other than the very brief essay written by Pellicer; the subsequent attempts by Father Bartolomé Pou, Capmany and Eustaquio Fernández de Navarrete having been lost or ignored, I some time ago decided to spare no effort to fill this gap”. Menéndez Pelayo’s positivist approach to historiography was decisive, in turn, in inspiring Cipriano Muñoz y Manzano, count of La Viñaza, to elaborate the famous *Bibliografía española de las lenguas indígenas de América* (1892), a benchmark in the study of the linguistic task carried out by the missionary-translators overseas. And here ends the list –

after so many centuries of intense international relations— of the most well-known attempts to write the history of Spanish translation.

3. The paradigm shift

Vega states (2004: 18) that it was Pierre Daniel Huet and Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo who laid the foundations of the discipline. In his work, “De claris interpretibus” published in *De interpretatione* (1683), Huet links together the history of the different Bible translations, analyzing in detail the versions by Rufinus, Origen and St. Jerome. As pointed out by Balliu (1995: 47), “historicity is the key to Huet’s thinking, since a historical approach can reveal the betrayals of the original truth: it is language that should be mistrusted”. In his *Bibliotheca de traductores españoles* (1874-1878), Menéndez Pelayo supports the idea of translation as a discipline going hand in hand with literature, understanding translation as another form of writing. José Toribio Medina’s work (1925) about Chilean translators is another landmark in the development of this historiographical awareness, which also follows the path opened up by Menéndez Pelayo.

In line with the above, Berman, in the well-known work quoted at the beginning of this article (1984: 12), explains the paramount importance of adopting a historical perspective: “La constitution d’une histoire de la traduction est la première tâche d’une théorie *moderne* de la traduction. À toute modernité appartient, non un regard passéiste, mais un mouvement de rétrospection qui est une saisie de soi”³. According to Hurtado Albir (2007: 102) and Sabio Pinilla (2006), the origin of this awareness which brought about a paradigm shift, that is, the modern interest in research into translation history, dates back to 1963, to the IV World Congress of the International Federation of Translators (FIT) held in Dubrovnik. The flood of publications which started to appear from that moment on led to the consolidation of translation history studies; so much so that years later the *Répertoire mondial des historiens de la traduction* was created in the XII FIT World Congress, and Delisle and Woodsworth published *Translators through History* (1995). This renowned collective work, which contributed greatly to the change of mindset in the discipline, was also a landmark in this translation-focused approach within general historiography which –according to Vega (2004: 19)– “should use the history of communication as an ancillary science not just alongside with numismatics or paleography but rather above them”.

Drawing on the ideas of the polysystem approach and the descriptive ideas of the School of Manipulation, historians of translation assumed the task of writing the history of the discipline, a task which, in Spain, had only been approached by history and philology. Vega Cernuda (2004: 19) describes the neglect traditionally suffered by translation history as follows:

The task of writing the history of translation is still treated with certain indifference, both by philologists and historians. Philology purists do not consider the chronicle of translation worthy of their work, and the big historiography, determined to argue over those who died in the Spanish civil war [...] or General Franco’s stature as a strategist, does not realize that both the war casualties and Franco’s stature were conditioned by communication, and views those who draw up a record of such communication as intruders.

That indifference is now a thing of the past thanks to the large number of research works which are gradually covering stages in the process of writing the history of the discipline. The congresses, colloquia, journals and seminars on translation history coordinated by Jesús Baigorri, Francisco Lafarga, Luis Pegenaute, Julio César Santoyo and Miguel Ángel Vega, together with their written works, have been –paraphrasing the latter (cf Vega 2004: 19)– the first and very cornerstones on which the new Tower of Babel has continued to be built.

³ That is, “the construction of a history of translation is the first task of a modern theory of translation. What characterizes modernity is not an infatuation with the past, but a movement of retrospection which is an infatuation with itself” (translated from French by S. Heyvaert. In Berman, Antoine. (1992) *The Experience of the Foreign*. Albany: State University of New York Press).

4. The flourishing of historiography

There is no doubt that the academic conferences organized by universities have activated and marked the continuity of historical research in Spain, as shown by the amount of articles, short presentations, papers and collective works resulting from such conferences. When talking about the congresses, conferences and symposia on translation history, the conferences held at the University of León should be first mentioned. The I Jornadas Nacionales de Historia de la Traducción (First National Congress of Translation History) held in León in February 1987 marked the beginning of a nonstop research output which still persists today. Julio César Santoyo (1988-1989) made a record of what happened at that congress in the two collective volumes of *Fidus interpretes*. After two decades devoted to research, this same historian published the treasured *Historia de la traducción: viejos y nuevos apuntes* (2008), which compiles some of his articles and papers presented at different scholarly meetings. The volume, which consists of eighteen chapters arranged chronologically from the third to the twentieth century, offers a synchronic analysis of the Spanish translation landscape in each period.

Although translation history has commonly been dealt with in an incidental way in the colloquia, congresses and symposia subsequently organized by different Spanish universities, some of these academic conferences deserve special mention for having programs mainly focused on historical aspects: the colloquium held at the University of Granada which resulted in the valuable volume titled *Traducir la Edad Media* (Paredes & Muñoz 1999); those held at the University of Barcelona about translation in Spain between 1750 and 1830, and about translation in the Neo-classical and Romantic periods (Lafarga 1999; Lafarga et al. 2002); the two editions of the HISTRAD Conference held in Alicante in 2010 and 2012, directed by Miguel Ángel Vega; the International Colloquium on the History of Translation in Spanish America (Barcelona, 2011), as well as the classic Encuentros Complutenses (Academic conferences on Translation held at the Complutense University of Madrid) or the Lucentino International Translation Symposia in Alicante, where there is always place for research on translation history. In other areas of translation and interpreting (legal, medical or technical areas), it is worth highlighting the relevance of history at the Coloquios Internacionales de Traducción Monacal (International Colloquia on Monastic Translation) held in Guadalupe, Soria and Asís (Spain) between 2001 and 2011 under the joint direction of Antonio Bueno and Miguel Ángel Vega. All these academic conferences have resulted in a large number of articles generally collected in proceedings and collective works, and even if they cannot be considered a primary source due to the dispersion of historical aspects and issues they deal with, they have no doubt contributed to the gradual consolidation of translation history studies in Spain.

Along with the above mentioned, the Spanish literature on translation currently comprises some major works dealing with the history of translation in Spain in a comprehensive way. By offering a panoramic view, these works try to address the lack of systematization that resulted from the spontaneous and disorganized flourishing of historiography in the vast field of translation history. In chronological order, the first of these works was *Aproximación a una historia de la traducción en España* (2000) by José Francisco Ruiz Casanova, a pioneer work as it presents a historical overview throughout the centuries. The book offers a systematic study of translation history –mainly focused on literary translation– linking it with the history of literature and its main chronological periods. Trying to imitate the historical and chronological perspective of this work –although with a different approach– the book *Historia de la traducción en España* was published in 2004. It is a collective work edited by Luis Pegenaute and Francisco Lafarga. According to the editors, the aim of the book is to adequately present the situation of translation in different historical periods in chronological order, combining the references to the work carried out by translators with the required mention to the rules of poetics that were valid or generally accepted in each period. Both this work and the former put their main focus on the history of literary translation. Despite this, Pegenaute and Lafarga's work introduces something new: it takes into account the linguistic diversity in Spain, including chapters devoted to the linguistic and cultural situation of Basque, Galician and Catalan languages. In this connection, it is worth mentioning the existence of other published works offering a historical overview of translation in the Basque Country (Mendiguren 1992), in

Galicia (Noia 1995), and in the Catalan-speaking regions (Bacardí & Godayol 2010), all of them written in their respective languages.

Among the works offering a panoramic view of translation history beyond literary translation, it is worth highlighting *Interpretación de conferencias: el nacimiento de una profesión*, by Jesús Baigorri (1999) and *Historia de la traducción en la Administración y en las relaciones internacionales en España (s. XVI-XIX)*, by Ingrid Cáceres Würsig (2004). In the introduction to her work, Cáceres criticizes the imbalance between the existing research works on literary translation and other types of translation. Thus, she agrees with López Alcalá (2001: 15) that “too much attention is paid to linguistics, language, text and literature, whereas little relevance is given to historical factors”.

The creation of lists and catalogues of translators –a task known to have been attempted before– gained momentum again with the publication of *Diccionario histórico de la traducción en España* (2009). This work, with over 800 entries, was edited by Lafarga and Pegenaute, and around 400 specialists, both national and international, participated in it. Likewise, in the Catalan-speaking sphere the publication of *Diccionari de la traducció catalana* (Bacardí & Godayol 2011) is particularly noteworthy, as it offers the first compilation of the most important translators into Catalan language of all time up to those born in 1950. This compilation was carried out by around eighty specialists and contains one thousand entries. The works by Alberto Ballester Izquierdo (1998 and 2007), covering more restricted geographical areas and periods, are also worth noting here.

Among the existing concise summaries of the history of translation in Spain, it is first worth mentioning the work by María del Carmen Sánchez Montero, written in Italian and published in 1998. The article by Van Hoof (1998) is also noteworthy here. It was written in French and published in the journal *Hieronymus Complutensis*, and, as pointed out by Lafarga (2005: 1138), it contains several “important mistakes”. In addition, the Routledge *Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* includes an entry about Spain (“Spanish Tradition”) in the section devoted to history. This entry was written in English by Anthony Pym in both editions of the book (1998b and 2009), and, as happens with Van Hoof’s article, dwells too much upon certain historical aspects to the detriment of others. In the light of these foreign contributions, it may be a good idea to raise the question –although the answer will not be offered here– on what has been published by Spanish translation historians in and about other countries.

Anthologies are of great importance because they include works which are difficult to find and show the evolution of the thoughts on translation. The work by Julio César Santoyo (1987) has gained recognition as “the first effort made to compile texts on translation in Spanish language” (cf Hurtado Albir 2007: 103). A particularly noteworthy work is the anthology of classic texts on translation theory edited by Miguel Ángel Vega (1994), who goes over the European discourse on translation throughout history in a long and thought-provoking introductory study, and presents a chart summarizing the evolution of translation studies and the literature on translation in a synthetic and very illustrative way – although this can only be found in the first edition of the book. Subsequently, different compilations have been published, such as the ones by Dámaso López (1996), Francisco Lafarga (1996) or Nora Catelli and Marietta Gargatagli (1998). Among the most recent ones, it is worth noting the work by Nelson Cartagena (2009), which has high historical value since part of the material included in this book had remained unpublished until then. At a regional level, there are also anthologies on translation in the cultural spheres of Basque (Mendiguren 1992), Galician (Dasilva 2003) and Catalan languages (Bacardí, Fontcuberta & Parecerisas 1998; Gallén et al. 2000; García & Lafarga 2004). Finally, the recently published work by J. A. Sabio Pinilla and Pilar Ordóñez (2012) cannot fail to be mentioned here. In their book, the authors carry out a review of the anthologies on translation published over the last twenty-five years, paying special attention to the history of translation.

Historiographical information can also be found in general translation textbooks, such as the ones by Eusebio Llácer (1997), Pedro San Ginés (1997) or Amparo Hurtado Albir (2001), who dedicate a significant part of their works to the historical development of translation theory and practice. In this connection, special mention should be given to the many and valuable

contributions made by Valentín García Yebra, some of which were compiled in his works *En torno a la traducción* (1983) and *Traducción: historia y teoría* (1994).

Among the web portals about translation history in Spain it is worth highlighting the following: HISTRAD, an open platform of the University of Alicante for research on the history of translation in Spain and Spanish America, directed by Miguel Ángel Vega Cernuda, (<http://web.ua.es/es/histrad/>); the electronic journal of translation history of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, *1611*, directed by Marietta Gargatagli and Juan Gabriel López Guix, (<http://www.traduccionliteraria.org/1611/index.htm>); the anthology of literary translations known as BITRES, *Biblioteca de traducciones españolas*, directed by Francisco Lafarga and Luis Pegenaute (<http://bib.cervantesvirtual.com/portal/bitres/>); and the website of the University of Valladolid devoted to the cataloguing and study of the translations made by the Spanish Franciscans, which resulted from a project directed by Antonio Bueno (<http://www.traduccion-franciscanos.uva.es/>). In addition, the Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes [Miguel de Cervantes Digital Library] includes a section with the abovementioned “Biblioteca de traducciones españolas”, directed by Francisco Lafarga and Luis Pegenaute within the framework of BITRES project (<http://bib.cervantesvirtual.com/portal/bitres/>).

Regarding print journals, at present there are not any publications in Spain specifically dealing with translation history, be it in its practical or theoretical aspects. The journals in which greater attention has been paid to historical aspects are, in chronological order, the following: *Livius*, the journal of the Department of Modern Philology of the University of León, of which fourteen issues were edited between 1992 and 1999; *Hieronymus Complutensis* published by the Instituto Universitario de Lenguas Modernas y Traductores (IULMyT) [University Institute of Modern Languages and Translators] of the Complutense University of Madrid, which has edited twelve issues since 1995; and *Hermēneus*, published by the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting at the University of Valladolid in Soria, which appeared in 1999.

Although at a different level of analysis, it should be pointed out that the academic sphere has played an important role in promoting research on translation history. The University Institute of Modern Languages and Translators (IULMyT) of the Complutense University of Madrid was created in 1974, becoming the first official university center devoted to the study and research of translation in Spain. Insofar as the topic dealt with here is concerned, the importance of the IULMyT lies in the fact that it was the first Spanish institution where a course in translation history was taught within the framework of the first PhD program in translation in 1991. This course was coordinated by Miguel Ángel Vega Cernuda. The first PhD dissertation which resulted from that translation history course was written by Lidia Taillefer de Haya, as proposed by and under the direction of Miguel Ángel Vega himself. It was presented for defense in 1995 and its title was *Bibliografía anglosajona de la traducción y ciencias auxiliares: corpus y examen crítico*.

5. Translation history in the classroom: future prospects

Reviewing the bibliography on the history of translation in Spain is a good way to see how the interest in this area has evolved. Analyzing the present curricula of the degrees in translation can be as well highly enlightening. However, what can be confirmed is quite different in each case: the research interest that has produced such a great deal of bibliography is not mirrored by teaching at a university level, where the importance of translation history is seen as relative. Suffice it to say that, of the twenty-four Spanish universities offering a degree in translation, only six (that is, twenty-five percent of them) include a translation history course in their curriculum. Despite its gradual introduction in the curricula, its acceptance –not to mention the interest in it– among students is no doubt questionable, given their urgent need to focus on translation technologies, that is, on mere tools serving translation in order to meet the new technological demands. It seems clear that most university degrees are part of the university-student-company triangle. In this context, and for the sake of productivity –which does not necessarily mean quality–, learning how to use computer-aided translation tools is gaining ground and eminence. This type of knowledge is just as necessary and incidental as once were typing or office IT, whose mere productivity purposes attract a majority of students clearly and

only worried about earning a living as translators. Proof of this is the success experienced in terms of demand by the master's degrees and courses on localization and translation technologies as opposed to those of a purely humanistic nature.

Of those six Spanish universities offering a translation history course as part of their degree curriculum, some teach this area as a substantial part of a wider course in translation theory. For instance, the course unit called Translation Theory and History taught at the University of Alicante in the academic year 2011-2012 combines the presentation of contents with the analysis of texts, which can be both primary theoretical sources and translations showing the theory studied in class. As far as the historical aspect is concerned, the course covers the following areas: scholars and schools of thought in classical translation theory, from Cicero to Ortega y Gasset; scholars and schools of thought in modern translation theory: on the one hand, pragmalinguistics, contrastive and corpus linguistics; on the other hand, the functionalist schools (the skopos and polysystem theories); and finally the ideological shift (post-colonial and feminist criticism, and the translator's visibility); translation and translators in world history, the history of translation in Spain until the Second Republic, and its history from then to the present day. Thus, the objectives of the course are: a) to provide prospective translators with the basis for reflection which will allow them to practice their profession in a conscious, rational and creative way; b) to lay the foundations for the future interest in researching translation's practical, cultural, and anthropological problems; c) to transmit the knowledge and critical reflections about the main schools that have dealt with the linguistic, cultural and anthropological aspects of translation, both from a historical and a systematic point of view; and d) to train students to develop professional and critical awareness about their own professional activity.

6. Conclusions

On the basis of all the above, it is possible to draw some conclusions and make some educated guesses. On the one hand, there is no doubt about the progress experienced by translation history studies in Spain due to the paradigm shift brought about by the descriptivist and polysystem theories. On the other hand, in line with Lafarga's ideas (2005: 1134), it has become apparent that this flourishing of research and the great deal of bibliography it has generated, has actually resulted in a vast variety of works and in thematic dispersion. The bulk of the existing bibliographic production consists of chapters and articles frequently scattered over different information channels, which, despite not being entirely devoted to historical aspects, have no doubt laid the foundations for a better –yet not sufficient– understanding of the history of translation and its theorizing in Spanish language.

The dispersion mentioned before has also raised the practical need for works offering a panoramic view of the history of translation. In fact, it was not until the year 2000 that the first collective work offering such a panoramic view was published. This work was followed by a more ambitious one in 2004, which also failed to establish clear periods in translation history, and followed the criteria of Spanish literary historiography or cultural history. Establishing periods and classifications in a comprehensive work that goes beyond literary translation is undoubtedly a real Gordian knot for Spanish translation history (cf Zarrouk 2007: 136). Sorting out this problem, however, would make a pivotal contribution to the methodological soundness of historical research and the theoretical reflection on translation.

As said at the beginning of this article, many authors have called for the need to write the history of translation using a well-founded methodological basis. Vega Cernuda (1996: 85) pointed out that “as the classical author said when he called history *magistra vitae*, portrayals of history are worthless unless they are used to draw practical conclusions. This is the true goal of translation historiography: to avoid mistakes, not only in the methodology used but also in our mutual appreciation”. In line with Jean Delisle and Anthony Pym, López Alcalá insists on this same idea and states that translation history still lacks methodological soundness and that a historiographical approach to translation, in which history itself should deserve a place of honor, is crucial for the discipline (López Alcalá 2001; quoted in Cáceres 2004: 22). More recently, the debate on methodology has been revived by Sabio Pinilla (2006), Mourad Zarrouk (2006 and

2007), and again, Vega Cernuda (in the present issue of *MonTI*), among others. Considering the development experienced by translation history studies, it is actually a paradox that there are yet no established periods of translation history or an agreed classification which can lay the foundations for a theory of translation historiography in Spain and provide a synthetic perspective on history.

On the other hand, the review of the bibliography also makes it clear that historians of translation –regardless of the territory or language within Spain that they deal with in their works– have put their main focus on the history of literary translation, neglecting other types of translation whose role has been equally important in history, such as legal and administrative translation, business translation, scientific and technical translation, or medical translation. The existing comprehensive works can be considered as such from a chronological point of view. However, they are not when looked at from an integrative perspective of the different areas of translation and interpreting.

Finally, while the prospects of historical recovery are clearly promising in the research field, the same cannot be said about teaching. This article started talking about translation history as an unfinished business in the past, the present and the future. In the past, because it was not until the mid-1980s that the paradigm shift which legitimized translation as an independent discipline took place. At present, it is still unfinished because, despite the number of studies dealing with translation from a historical point of view, there is not yet an agreement on the different periods of translation history or a classification of translation historiography, and therefore there is still a lack of comprehensive works analyzing all the aspects of translation history in a systematic way. And this will continue to be an unfinished business in the future because universities have proved their inability to be independent –which does not mean unawareness– when faced with the economic situation, and this has resulted in an obvious disdain for the humanities in order to favor technical disciplines. In those curricula designed to achieve mercantilist goals, the technical training of future translators could end up replacing translation history courses, which –in the best-case scenario– would be relegated to postgraduate programs of a humanistic nature, just where they began to be taught. Little would we have learned from history if the essence of the translator’s humanistic duty were to be lost.

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