

CORDINGLEY, Anthony and FRIGAU MANNING, Céline, eds.
(2017): *Collaborative Translation: From the Renaissance to the Digital Age*. London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 272 p.

Liane Johnston Grant

Volume 64, Number 1, April 2019

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1065342ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1065342ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal

ISSN

0026-0452 (print)

1492-1421 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Johnston Grant, L. (2019). Review of [CORDINGLEY, Anthony and FRIGAU MANNING, Céline, eds. (2017): *Collaborative Translation: From the Renaissance to the Digital Age*. London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 272 p.] *Meta*, 64(1), 296–298. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1065342ar>

versions françaises [non officielles] des textes constitutionnels en reconnaissant du même souffle que celles-ci n'ont aucune force sur le plan juridique? (p. 5)

Selon ces derniers, l'officialisation de la langue française aux côtés de la langue anglaise, banalisée par les élus bien qu'exigée par la Constitution, est requise afin d'accorder au peuple francophone la reconnaissance de sa légitimité politique, laquelle repose sur le principe fondateur de la dualité linguistique. Lui dénier ce droit prolonge et accentue l'injustice. Pendant que le Canada semble attendre qu'une menace pèse sur «l'intégrité du pays [...] qui inciterait la classe politique à officialiser la version française de la Constitution canadienne» (p. 5), suggère l'ouvrage, la «grave erreur» (p. 208) de l'article 55 continue d'alimenter le clivage linguistique. Mentionnons pour finir que l'ouvrage laisse entrevoir de multiples pistes de recherche dont certaines concernent la discipline de la traduction.

CATHERINE ZEKRI

École nationale d'administration publique,
Montréal, Canada

CORDINGLEY, Anthony and FRIGAU MANNING, Céline, eds. (2017): *Collaborative Translation: From the Renaissance to the Digital Age*. London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 272 p.

The *Bloomsbury Advances in Translation* series is edited by Jeremy Munday, director of the Centre for Translation Studies at the University of Leeds. The first volume was published in 2011, and this book represents its twelfth publication. With a focus on translation practices, processes and theory, the series has increased its pace to match the progress in Translation Studies research, with three more books having followed this one in 2017 alone. Other translation topics covered in the series include training, music and poetry, retranslation and adaptation, as well as cultural and institutional translation.

The editors of *Collaborative Translation: From the Renaissance to the Digital Age*, both Associate Professors at the Université Paris 8, bring unique backgrounds to the project. Cordingley publishes in the area of self-translation, having served as editor of a text (Cordingley 2013) in a related series called *Bloomsbury Studies in Translation*. Manning focuses on translation of the arts, namely theatre and opera, writing on this subject for various journals including *Opera Quarterly* and *Nineteenth-Century Music*. It is therefore not surprising that one third of the book is devoted to author-translator collaboration, and several chap-

ters deal with translating comedies and poetry. Unfortunately, this is done at the expense of other topics that one might expect in a book about collaborative translation, such as the efficacy of various collaborative techniques, or the various roles present within a translation team. Nevertheless, valuable material is presented in relation to several aspects of collaboration, with each chapter being separately authored.

The introduction establishes a clear definition of collaborative translation. It is validated as being a legitimate and positive activity, the wartime perceptions of "collaboration with the enemy" being long outdated. Not only has it existed for many centuries, but collaboration was actually the norm for both translation and writing until the Renaissance. At that time, it became a hidden activity as a result of the prevailing "myths of singularity" (p. 4) which attributed genius to a single author. The advent of copyrights only reinforced the practice of labelling a text with a single name rather than recognizing the teamwork involved in most creative endeavours. The recent interest in collaborative translation signals a return to a historic activity and an acknowledgement that it has always existed. The editors conclude that a translation can be called collaborative if there is consistent interaction throughout the process, whether simultaneous or successive. This can include the input of authors, advisors, editors, and consultants.

Section 1 expounds on the visibility of collaborative translation throughout history. Belén Bistué posits that in the 15th century, Leonardo Bruni was instrumental in suppressing its value, by the simple fact that he excluded it from his treatise¹ about correct translation (Viti 2004). His reflection on translation is considered by some to be hypocritical since he emphasized excellence in both source and target languages, yet used Latin words to refer to Greek writings, unlike other authors of his time. Centuries later, collaborative translation made a comeback in an area to which it is well suited, perhaps even necessary: theatrical translation. Françoise Decroisette recounts how in 1993, the European Goldoni Association gathered together twenty translators to produce a shared translation of forty untranslated comedies written by Carlo Goldoni. The collaboration involved not only these translators, but also actors, directors and spectators who gave feedback to help form the finished product.

During this time, a longer-running project was in progress from 1987 to 2000, involving collaborative translation of texts by Guicciardini, Savonarola and Machiavelli. Chapter authors Jean-Louis Fournel and Jean-Claude Zancarani discuss how the guiding rule was that "the translated

works have as much richness [...] as the Italian works" (p. 71). It was discovered that whether translating in pairs or in the context of a translation workshop, the complementary skills of those involved resulted in a better product than what a single translator could have achieved. So we see that as we entered the 21st century, collaborative translation had already been firmly re-established as a valid and valuable activity.

The second section of this book begins with a comparison by Patrick Hersant of various forms of author collaboration, based on varying degrees of desire for control on the part of the author. Collaboration that occurs before the translation begins can involve either complete freedom for the translator or general recommendations related to style; this is common when the author does not know the target language. Involvement after the translation is completed requires the author to be fluent in the other language, and is basically a revision with the goal of improving the translation or clarifying certain details. More variety appears in author collaboration that happens during the translation process. This ranges from question/answer sessions or back-and-forth communications, to "closelaborations" (p. 95) where the author and translator actively work together. Interestingly enough, this sometimes results in the author making modifications to the original text based on what has come to light in the translation process. The personalities of the author and translator are determining factors in the success of the translation; some are never even published because of an inability to resolve disagreements.

Three 20th century examples illustrate the effectiveness of various collaborative translation methods. According to Olga Anokhina, Vladimir Nabokov embodied the close control end of the spectrum, requiring literal translations that he revised to his own satisfaction. Oddly enough, he required his French translators to work from the English translation rather than the Russian original. Because of his fastidious ways, Nabokov had difficulty keeping translators. On the other hand, as Céline Letawe points out in her chapter, Günter Grass took a proactive approach to collaboration, providing documents, correspondence and working seminars. Rather than impose his own solution to translation problems, he encouraged the translators to compromise between faithfulness and liberty, instructing them to "become authors" (p. 136). His translators enjoyed working under this type of collaboration. A third model is presented by Abigail Lang: the Royaumont Translation Seminars which involved 52 translation seminars, 93 poets and 22 languages (with word-for-word interpreters standing by). A group of translators would collaborate with an author for several days,

followed by a public reading and publication of the poetry, the goal being to develop an anthology. This experiment was able to debunk the myth of poetry being untranslatable, and sparked new interest both in poetry and in translation centres and workshops.

The title of the final section, *Environments of Collaboration*, sounds promising from a practical standpoint, and in fact two useful environments are presented. Anna Zielinska-Elliott and Ika Kaminka demonstrate that the European translators of best-selling Japanese author Haruki Murakami have gone beyond the basic models of collaboration to create a collaboration system between translators of the same work into different languages, without any author involvement whatsoever. This generated so much interest that they transformed it into an online collaboration that is "translator-initiated [...] solution-oriented" (p. 177) where they tackle issues such as metaphors, idioms, and foreignness. The next chapter by Miguel A. Jiménez-Crespo explores crowdsourcing, a topic expanded on in another book which he recently authored (Jiménez-Crespo 2017). It provides helpful charts to accurately define this type of translation activity. Although non-solicited translation collaboration by fans is common, it is proposed that the term *crowdsourcing* should only be used "when a call to a community to participate over the web is made" (p. 205). Other issues are discussed, such as quality concerns, and the ethics of remuneration, translator visibility and minority language policies.

The final two chapters in this section actually seem to stray from the idea of collaborative translation. The one by Gillian Lane-Mercier focuses primarily on sponsorship for translation. Ethical and political questions are raised in relation to the Translation Grants Program of the Canada Council for the Arts. Despite the value of equality being expressed in its mission, the grants are heavily weighted toward French translations, and aboriginal languages receive very little support. The next chapter by Michael Cronin undertakes a philosophical exploration of translation ecology, collaboration and resilience, which seems to be on the very fringes of the book's stated topic. However, he does encourage bringing back the translator's visibility, and promotes undertaking the translation of supposedly untranslatable material.

As set out in the book description, this text does firmly re-establish the history and value of collaborative translation. Overall, though, I was disappointed with the narrow focus of the book and its lack of relevance to my own research related to collaborative translation by volunteers within a non-profit organization, who work with diverse types of material. It has proved to be extremely

difficult to find information on this type of activity. I was hoping that a book of this size would provide a comprehensive look at roles and techniques for the actual work of translation and editing that happens when a team collaborates, but there were only a few small examples. It seems that the goal was to highlight practices and introduce some theory, rather than concentrate on the real processes of collaboration.

However, the book does provide general insights for those seeking to learn about collaborating with authors on a translation, including working with multiple languages. It also provides information about using online tools for collaboration and crowdsourcing. I found it fairly easy to read except for the last chapter, which seemed somewhat disjointed. As with all Bloomsbury publications, the book is beautifully bound, with clear type. The chapters are arranged in logical sections which progress from the history of collaborative translation to actual contemporary practices. I feel that the book would be most valuable to translators and groups of translators intending to work mainly with a single author or type of literature.

LIANE JOHNSTON GRANT

Université de Montréal, Montréal, Canada

NOTES

1. BRUNI, Leonardo (1420-1426/2004): De interpretatione recta [De la traduction parfaite]. In: Paolo VITI, ed. *Sulla perfetta traduzione* [Sur la traduction parfaite]. Naples: Liguori Editore.

REFERENCES

- BRUNI, Leonardo (1420-1426/2004): De interpretatione recta. In: Paolo VITI, ed. *Sulla perfetta traduzione*. Naples: Liguori Editore.
- CORDINGLEY, Anthony, ed. (2013): *Self-Translation: Brokering Originality in Hybrid Culture*. London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- JIMÉNEZ-CRESPO, Miguel A. (2017): *Crowdsourcing and Online Collaborative Translations*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- VITI, Paolo (2004): *Sulla perfetta traduzione* [Sur la traduction parfaite]. Naples: Liguori Editore.
- DECONINCK, Julie, HUMBLÉ, Philippe, SEPP, Arvi et al., dir. (2017): *Towards Transcultural Awareness in Translation Pedagogy*. Zurich: LIT Verlag, 271 p.
- L'ouvrage *Towards Transcultural Awareness in Translation Pedagogy*, publié sous la direction de Julie Deconinck, Philippe Humblé, Arvi Sepp et Hélène Stengers, constitue le numéro douze de la collection «Representation - Transformation» dirigée par Michaela Wolf. Le livre regroupe des perspectives théoriques et des idées pratiques sur la dimension culturelle en pédagogie de la traduction. Les auteurs proposent des analyses empiriques et didactiques aussi diverses qu'étendues sur la conception des cours ainsi que sur la docimologie en traduction. Ils partagent le postulat selon lequel les enseignants, dans un cours de traduction, doivent sensibiliser les étudiants à la négociation et la prise en compte des différences culturelles. L'ouvrage renferme une introduction, douze chapitres répartis en trois parties, les notices biographiques des auteurs et deux index.
- Rédigée par les quatre directeurs, tous enseignants de traduction à la Vrije Universiteit de Bruxelles en Belgique, l'introduction du livre présente les idées fondamentales qui sous-tendent les perspectives développées par les différents auteurs des douze chapitres. Ces enseignants-traductologues soutiennent le point de vue selon lequel toute traduction, quel que soit le genre ou le contexte, relève essentiellement et fondamentalement de la communication entre des cultures. Par conséquent, ils postulent que dans un cours de traduction, les étudiants doivent être sensibilisés au fait que tout texte à traduire est imprégné d'éléments culturels et que l'analyse de l'écart culturel entre la langue source et la langue cible constitue une condition nécessaire pour la réussite de toute activité de traduction. Ils notent que si une telle affirmation paraît évidente, les différentes approches employées pour enseigner la traduction des éléments culturels ne sont pas mises en évidence ou ces approches sont sous-présentées. C'est dans le but de combler cette lacune que les directeurs ont compilé un certain nombre de perspectives théoriques et d'expériences d'enseignement sur le sujet suivant: «comment aborder la dimension culturelle dans la pédagogie de la traduction» (p. 1; notre traduction). Ainsi, l'ouvrage fait état d'une diversité de perspectives théoriques provenant de différents paradigmes et disciplines et témoignant de plusieurs situations d'enseignement de la traduction et de la culture.
- La première partie, intitulée *Theoretical Reflections on Translation Pedagogy and Transculturalism*, est composée de quatre chapitres. Dans le premier chapitre qui porte le titre *The Position of Translation Training: Another Success Story?*, José Lambert (Université de Louvain et Université fédérale de Ceará) jette la lumière sur la distinction entre l'institutionnalisation de la traduction et l'institutionnalisation de la traductologie, et estime que cette dernière représente un moment charnière dans l'histoire des universités et de l'univers des connaissances. Lambert soulève la problématique liée au concept de *translation studies* tel qu'il a été conçu par Holmes (1972). Il attire également