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Federico M. Federici & Dario Tessicini. Translators, interpreters, and cultural negotiators. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 254pp.

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The forces that shape intercultural negotiation with institutional powers by translators, interpreters and cultural mediators are the central theme of the book. In the introduction, one of the editors, Tessicini, likens translation to the mercantile act of negotiation: “intended as a compromise in which each party goes back and forth with offers and concessions, and is ready to accept both gains and losses as part of the transaction” (1). Put simply, the results of negotiating a business transaction can be inferred from the differences between the final selling price and the initial prices proposed by the parties involved in the business process. Similarly, differences between the source and target languages reflect negotiation during translation. Specifically, modifications made to a written translation that are detectable in the target language, such as the adding or omitting of materials, a more explicit or implicit text, selective emphasis of the source text, and the provision of translator’s notes, indicate the results of negotiation or the invisibility of the translator, in Venuti’s (2008) words.

To study interpreters’ negotiation practices, the notion of a visibility continuum (Angelelli, 2004) may be useful. The results of negotiation during interpreting can be inferred from interpreters’ deviation from the “conduit” approach to interpreting, i.e., the extent to which they depart from the restrictive role of language handlers to become mediators, cultural brokers, informants or even spies. But due to the fleeting nature of spoken utterances, the study of the negotiation in interpreting is more problematic, especially without the transcriptions of audio or video recordings.

However, as the aim of the book is not to explore the results of the negotiation process, its comparison of source and target texts is limited. Instead, the authors of the 11 chapters focus on the multiple external forces that shape negotiation. The presentation of translators or interpreters mainly through a historical lens gives the impression that translators and interpreters play multilayered roles; they may be subversive, subservient, or both. However, whether this role-playing is conscious or unconscious is beyond the scope of the book. Whilst all of the authors acknowledge that multiple linguistic and non-linguistic forces shape the negotiation process, some focus on linguistics, whereas others do not.

Although translators may introduce foreign concepts, ideas and expressions to a target text in the process of translation, Tatjana Đurin addresses the significant roles played by four individuals in “facilitating the spread of foreign cultures into Serbia and contributing to the development of the Serbian language and part of its literary tradition” (12). The three translators, known as Isaiah the Monk, Gabriel the

Hilandarian, and Constantine the Philosopher, translated Greek texts into Serbian-Slavonic and had to negotiate between “the expressiveness and richness of the Greek language” (14) and the “imperfection and inferiority of the Slavonic language” (14), and ended up translating word for word, using calques to create new terms and inventing a new orthography. The fourth individual, Gregory the Hilandarian, who negotiated “translation without an original” (16) when editing a Slavonic translation, opined in Durin’s words that “the translator is a mediator,” required “to serve both the source text and the target text, in order to serve the truth” (18).

The fluidity of the negotiation process is evidenced in Sergio Portelli’s account of Bryskett’s inclusion of translated texts in his own book *Discourse of Civil Life*. For instance, when translating a treatise by Giradi for incorporation into the *Discourse*, Bryskett omitted “non-essential references to classical writers entirely” (117), and sometimes did away with “whole passages that he [deemed] unnecessary to the argument” (117). He also used “easily understandable Latin terms because of the unavailability of corresponding terms in English” (119).

Madhuvanti Chintamani Karyeka centers her discussion of translators’ negotiation practices on Hegel’s critique of Schlegel’s translation of the *Gītā* from Latin into Sanskrit, noting that despite his commentary on the translation Hegel “neither learnt Sanskrit nor translated anything from Sanskrit” (158). The focal point of her discussion is the notion of “double fidelity” (168). Highlighting Hegel’s criticism of the translation of culturally specific terms by Schlegel, Karyeka argues that the act of translation is characterized by a “to-and fro movement” (170), “capturing the essence of source language terms and delivering them to target language readers.”

Mohammad Emami uses a corpus-based approach to examine Iranian translators’ negotiation of “ideological, cultural and individual factors” when translating American-English stories into Persian. Negotiating with non-English literate editors, profit-driven publishers and government officials sensitive to the ideological implications of translations, translators are likely to be responsible for “the prevailing critical intervention” (187). However, as Emami observes, the message of the source text usually remains intact, as translators’ intervention is minimal. The source-language message is lost when, presumably, the translator is lost due to a lack of understanding of the source text or inadequate translation skills.

Russia is geographically vast, and many languages have historically been spoken within its borders. However, due to the dominance of the Russian language, many indigenous languages have become endangered. Veronica Razumovskaya uses the translation of *Olonkho* to highlight some of the forces that shape the negotiation of translation from Yakut. Due to frequent contact between Yakut and Russian speakers, the translation of Yakut cultural phenomena into Russian “presents [few] difficulties” (206). However, it is extremely difficult to translate Yakut proper names, which have both functional and fictional features. Razumovskaya notes the use of common

translation techniques such as adding comments, creating calques and translating literally to negotiate the translation of these names into Russian.

The authors of the next six reviewed chapters appear to be less linguistically oriented than those of the previous five. Isabella Lazzarini discusses translators' negotiation of multiple levels of translation during Italian diplomatic and political interaction, with reference to four very interesting events of the 15th century. During the early Renaissance, the act of translation was "at the very heart of the negotiation and decision-making process" (43), due to the involvement of various social actors and the need for a range of skills.

In another piece on Italy, Dario Brancato debunks the assumption of competition between three translations of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*. Brancato analyzes the cultural and political agenda of Cosimo I de' Medici, who commissioned the translations of the *Consolation*, and, citing Varchi's intellectual prominence across Italy, concludes that "the status Varchi's translation achieved is due to Cosimo's cultural propaganda outside Florence" (55).

Natalie Zemon Davis focuses on Hasan al-Wazzan, a Muslim and North African diplomat who was later captured and brought to Italy, where he converted to Christianity and was given the name Giovanni Leone. As a diplomat, al-Wazzan was first an interpreting user; after his capture, he edited a translation; and he finally became a writer obliged to address culturally sensitive matters in a language acquired after his capture. As a diplomat, al-Wazzan had to bring messages to foreign dignitaries. As an interpreting user, Zemon Davis reports, al-Wazzan watched the face of every foreign shaykh while their message was interpreted, probably to gauge the accuracy of the interpretation. After living in Italy for a number of years, Leone was tasked with editing Joan Gabriel's translation of the Latin Qur'an. As a former Muslim writing in Latin about Africa, Leone had to fulfill various acts of cultural mediation, especially when writing about delicate matters such as sexuality and religion.

Federico M. Federici describes the many roles played by Michel Angelo Giovanni Corai, formerly known as Fathullah Qurray, throughout his life. As a translator, an interpreter, a government commissioner, a secret envoy, an official diplomat and a knight, Corai had to negotiate between European and Eastern powers. These roles, Federici concludes, "are part of the micro-history of a translator and interpreter who operated in the fluid diplomatic context of the sixteenth and seventeenth century in which formal and informal diplomacy at high levels were complex, difficult to define, and ultimately fairly interchangeable" (99).

Maria Laura Spoturno focuses on Malinche, Captain Cortés' major interpreter during the Conquest of Mexico. Malinche was more than a mere interpreter; she was also "an agent of change and communication" (133) due to her language abilities, which brought her into close contact with both conquerors and the conquered. Therefore, she

“played a crucial role in the negotiation of power” (133) in “circumstances marked by extreme physical, sexual, religious, linguistic and cultural violence” (133).

Rather than focusing on a single interpreter, Pin-ling Chang discusses the many interpreters working from the beginning of Dutch rule of Taiwan to the Chengs’ occupation of the island. These interpreters were not only numerous but came from very diverse backgrounds. In addition to interpreting, they played various official roles, such as “negotiating with village elders, collecting tax, and purchasing commodities” on behalf of the [Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie] (142). The Chinese interpreter Pingqua played an instrumental albeit unofficial role in aiding “Koxiga’s defeat of the Dutch in early 1662” (145) by “persuading Koxiga to invade Taiwan” (148). The racial factor seems implicit and nuanced when we consider the differences between the treatment of non-European interpreters under Dutch rule and of non-Asian interpreters under Chinese rule.

The aim of historical study is to explore not “the unique, but what is general in the unique” (Carr, 1961: 80). A historical discussion of the forces shaping the work of translators and interpreters certainly offers valuable holistic insights into the processes of translation and interpreting. However, the extent to which historical discussion of the negotiation involved in translation and interpreting can advance the professionalization, education, and training of translators and interpreters remains unclear.

Angelelli, Claudia V. (2004). *Medical interpreting and cross-cultural communication*. Cambridge University Press.

Carr, E. H. (1961). *What is history?* New York: Random House.

Venuti, Lawrence. (2008). *The translator's invisibility: A history of translation*. Routledge.