

Literary Translation in Modern Iran: A Sociological Study, by Esmail Haddadian-Moghaddam, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2014, ISBN 978 90 272 5854 0 (hbk), 236 pp.

Volume 114 of Benjamins Translation Library offers a groundbreaking study of the issue of agency in the field of literary translation in Iran from the late Qajar period in the nineteenth century to the present. By focusing on agents of translation (translators, editors, publishers, and to some extent the state's cultural policies in Iran) rather than just texts, this study places itself in the recently developed field of translation studies (TS) and sociology. It is comprised of an introductory section followed by six chapters, covering seven case studies. The order is chronological, starting from the late Qajar period in the nineteenth century to modern-day Iran.

The introduction mentions the entry in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Baker 1989, Baker and Saldanha 2009) as one of the few sources on the topic of the history of translation in Iran and the researchers' reluctance in exploring the under-researched field of translation in modern Iran, and, in particular, that of the post-Revolution era. It also mentions that scholars of Iranian/Persian/Persianate studies hardly approach translation independently and never reflect upon their position toward the increasing importance of translation, and, consequently, the growing interest in translation studies in Iran. The introduction answers the question "why does this volume focus on novels from English and on modern Iran?" Firstly, translations into Persian contributed to the modernization of Iran and its encounter with the West; secondly, the translations of literary works contributed to the development of Persian literature by introducing new literary genres and it had a great impact on the Persian language; finally, the translations of novels from English has continued to increase both in pre- and post-Revolution Iran.

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 1 provides the theoretical and methodological aspects adopted in this volume. This chapter deals with the sociological turn in translation and sociological approaches to translation. The section "Concepts in Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of culture" gives a description of the three concepts, "Field," "Habitus," and "Capital," and their relevance to the study. The section "Methodological issues" introduces the author's three-tier model for the study of agency, which covers three levels, decision, motivation and context, along with two agents, translator and publisher. The section provides scholars interested in conducting research on literary translation in Iran with very useful information.

Chapter 2 presents a historical and political overview of modern Iran, from the time of the Qajars (1797–1925) to the post-Revolution period, to help the readers unfamiliar with Iran to better understand the historical background of the study. This is followed by a critical analysis of both public and academic discourses of translation in

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Iran to familiarize the reader with the development of translation in the period under study. This part contains valuable information concerning the Iranian perception of translation. It engages with the academic discourse and mentions the discourse's neglect of many key issues, including the impact of post-Revolution cultural policies on translation, and the motivations of agents of translation. The reasons behind this are the shortage of qualified TS scholars in Iranian universities and the lack of sufficient resources, discouraging research on sensitive issues like censorship and the cultural policies of the post-Revolution at Iranian universities, and graduate students' preference for the well-trodden path of linguistic-oriented research, which will get them a pass in studies and entry into the job market. Due to the voluminous size of the non-academic resources, only an overview of them is provided in Chapter 2 in order to identify the major trends, including "concern for Persian." Various agents of translation are at work to create a culture of concern for Persian in translation, whereby the academics guard it linguistically and the state guards it ideologically. As a result of an exchange between academic and non-academic discourses on translation, many aspects of translation overlooked in the academic discourse have been dealt with in non-academic works and some of these sources have found their way into academic journals. The role of prison in the professionalization of translators and the role of the Iranian Left and, in particular, the Tudeh Party in shaping translation practices in the pre-Revolution period is an example of unexplored issues that the author refers to. The chapter concludes that the discourse of translation in Iran is produced equally by both academics and non-academics, each pursuing their own agenda.

Chapter 3, "The Qajar Period (1795–1925)," begins with an overview of translation during the period. A review of the translated titles suggests little evidence of systematic norms for the selection of works for translation (p. 56). This section also provides a few examples of how the Qajar kings, especially Nasir al-Din Shah, and the royal family, were both the patrons and sometimes the suppressors of translations. It mentions the issue of censorship, which can be traced back to Qajar era, when both punitive and prior censorship was in force. The overview ends with the accumulation of symbolic capital accorded to foreign literature, and hence to the agents of translation who were exercising their agency as a common feature of the nascent publishing field in the Qajar period. After the overview, the first case study of agency is dealt with in the translation and production of the Persian translation of James Morier's *The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan* (1824). Through an analysis of the Persian translation, previous scholarship, and certain agents of translation, this section narrates the interesting story of the travel of different texts and agents of translation. Through this analysis the author proposes the concept of pro-risk agents of translation (both Esfahani and Kermani) and traveling agency as two fresh ways of looking at agency and charting the historical movements of agents of translation. The section recognizes *The Adventures'* significance for the historiography of the Persian tradition of translation. The chapter concludes with the factors which constrained the agency of translators and publishers, i.e. the lack of capital, insufficient infrastructure, and low literacy, along with factors which increased the agency of translators and publishers

—the growing population of literates, the need for books, the introduction of new literary genres such as novels, and the improved distribution network.

Chapter 4, “The Pahlavi Period (1925–1979),” starts with an overview of translation, the publishing field, and translation flow during the period. During the period of Reza Shah, the number of translations increased, lithograph printing was gradually substituted with modern printing methods, and the first private publishing houses were founded due to his general policy of modernization in Iran. The overview covers the issue of censorship during the Pahlavi period. In the later period of the Pahlavis, translators and publishers developed strategies including unauthorized publications and the use of figurative language. The overview covers the issue of copyright. Following this overview, the pedagogical agency of an Iranian woman translator is studied. The case study here is Shams al-Moluk Mosaheb’s translation of Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* (1336/1957). By examining the translator’s social and cultural role in the larger context of Iran in the early twentieth century, the role of translation in the simplification of the Persian prose style is exemplified. Analysis of paratext (translator’s introduction, the title and copyright page, and the publisher’s promotional materials) to find out about the translator’s and publisher’s agency is interesting. The last section focuses on the Amir Kabir Publishing House, Bongah-e Tarjomeh va Nashr-e Ketab and the Tehran branch of the Franklin Book Programs, three major publishing institutions that played key roles in the development of the translation and publishing field in Iran. Through historical documents the role of individual and institutional agency in the formation and development of the publishing field in Iran is highlighted. To study these publishers contributes to a better understanding of the historical development of translation in modern Iran. The case of Homayun Sanati (1924–2009) and Franklin/Tehran is illuminating. It exemplifies how someone considered an “anti-communist instrument” for the US “made optimum use of institutional agency to move beyond the implicit political motives of a foreign institution toward greater cultural achievements” (p. 110).

Chapter 5, “The Post-Revolution Period (1979–Present),” starts with an overview of translation, translation flows, and the publishing field. Following a brief sketch of the “Cultural Revolution,” this overview focuses on three main issues: the selection of titles, the motivations of agents of translation, and censorship. Concerning the selection of titles, the translators show high levels of agency. Concerning motivations, translators point to various social and cultural motives and tend to prioritize non-economic motives over economic ones. The overview includes a section on the publishing field in the period and one on translation flows. The section on the publishing field deals with the government’s different supportive policies which have created confusion and corruption. The section on translation flows mentions fluctuations in the number of novels translated in the post-Revolution era, which might be explained in terms of the state’s cultural policies. Following the overview, four case studies are presented. The first is a survey of the general perceptions of Iranian translators on various issues, including their positions in the publishing field, their professional trajectory, their motivations, censorship, and copyright. It also briefly discusses the Iran Annual Book Prize for literary translators. The second case study is on agency in

Reza Rezaei's translation of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Through interviews with both the translator and the publisher and textual and paratextual analyses, the levels of agency are studied. The study of the paratext covers four subsections: an introduction; the translator's introduction; an analysis of the cover page; and an analysis of the publisher's promotional materials. The next case study concerns agency in the translation of Mario Vargas Llosa's *The War of the End of the World* as an example of indirect translation. The last case study covers women literary translators in the post-Revolution era. Through face-to-face interviews with three translators, Mozhdah Daqiqi (1956–), Khojasteh Keyhan (1948–) and Shirin Ta'avoni (1945–), and drawing on archival materials, it explores the ways that women literary translators conceive and practice their agency in translation.

The concluding chapter presents the findings of the study. One of the findings concerns conformity with censorship, which is often overlooked. This chapter refers to the implications of this study for various fields. One implication is the three-tier model of agency developed in this study, which will provide a better picture of how agents of translation exercise their agency across different cultures. Another implication concerns censorship and agency: despite the picture drawn of certain regimes in which intellectuals, writers, translators, and authors are depicted as rather voiceless, Iranian agents of translation have managed to exercise their agency to resist the authoritative homogenization. This chapter looks at the limitations of the study and a number of important issues that have not been examined, including translation from non-English languages, the share of the Persian novel in the market of literary works, the reception of translations, and the share of state-run publishing houses and organizations in the field of cultural production and measuring their impact. Despite some "reservations" in the application of Bourdieu's sociological concepts to Iran, his "thinking tools," the product of a French environment, are not all irrelevant to the case of Iran, which has a different economic and political system (pp. 184–5). The final section, "More to Do?," lists several areas which deserve further research. The list suggests eight interesting areas of study the last of which concerns "the reception of literary translation" (p. 188). A recently released volume, *The Persian Whitman: Beyond a Literary Reception* answers some of the questions raised here.

The significant contribution of the volume, the three-tier model for the study of agency, can develop into a more comprehensive model. It covers only two agents, the translator and the publisher. Including the (consulting and series) editor as an agent of translation will improve the model. The case of Khashayar Deyhimi as a consulting editor and his role in title selection is illuminating. Furthermore, the editors who work on the submitted translation can show varying degrees of agency depending on the type and amount of capital at their disposal. In the Iranian context, Sayeh Eghtesadinia proves an interesting case. The unlikeable agents, censors also show varying degrees of agency. As the examples provided in the volume indicate, censors sometimes play a significant role. Including these agents will also contribute to making the model more comprehensive. Due to the absence of literary agents in Iran, it is quite understandable that the model proposed here does not cover them. I would suggest that future studies applying the model to a different context tailor it to include the role

of literary agents. The model proposed covers three levels, decision, motivation and context, and the decision level is divided into two sublevels, title and meta-title. In his application of the model the author focused primarily on the title sublevel at the expense of the meta-title sublevel, in particular stylistic preference, where the translator makes constant and consistent decisions to exert their agency and express their individuality. In a few stances where the author pays attention to the aforementioned points, the limited amount of evidence from the texts under study is not sufficient to help the reader to come to any convincing conclusion.


The author makes extensive use of ideas expressed by Iranian translators or scholars of translation studies. He could have taken a more critical stance toward those points to make his voice heard more clearly. The volume is highly informative in various sections, including the section on women translators, and the reader expects more thorough analysis of the information collected. I hope future works on agency in (literary) translation in Iran, either by the same author or other researchers interested in the field, overcome this shortcoming. Chapter 5 mentions the strategies that translators and publishers employ when dealing with censorship, including being patient and talking publicly about their translation and manuscripts while waiting for permission from the ministry. The chapter mentions the extreme example of Badi'ee, who has been waiting for publication permission for his translation of Joyce's *Ulysses* for more than twenty years. Recent publication of translations of the same work by Farid Ghadami (1985–) and Akram Pedramnia (1969–), the former in Iran and the latter in London, provides interesting cases for a comparative study on the effects of censorship on literary translation. Future works on translation in Iran can study the case of this work's translation into Persian to shed light on the issue of censorship, translator's agency and the relation between the two.

There are several instances of minor problems, of which I mention two. On page 56, the dates "(1808–1848)" are not correct for Mohammad-Ali Shah. On page 96, the book cover is referred to as a part of the epitext. According to Genette in *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, the "epitext is any paratextual element not materially appended to the text within the same volume but circulating, as it were, freely, in a virtually limitless physical and social space" (p. 344). Therefore, a book cover is not a part of the epitext, but of the peritext.

Literary Translation in Modern Iran is highly recommended for researchers working on various aspects of both translation in Iran and the Iranian publishing industry. Recently researchers have started to show interest in translation in Iran. Unlike their Western counterparts, Iranian translators enjoy a significant level of visibility and agency. Nevertheless, the issue of agency in the Iranian context remained unexamined and this volume is a groundbreaking work. From my research experience in Iran I understand that collecting data for this study must not have been an easy task; Haddadian-Moghaddam did an excellent job to gather all the information. *Literary Translation in Modern Iran* will move the field of Iranian translation studies forward and will facilitate further conversations among scholars of translation studies and modern Persian literature.

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Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Benedek Péri with Mojdeh Mohammadi and Miklós Sárközy, Leiden: Brill, 2018, ISBN 9789004367883 (hardback), 392 pp.

This useful volume sheds light on a relatively unknown collection of Persian manuscripts, namely those preserved in the Oriental Collection of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest. The volume is the fifth in a series of published catalogues providing detailed description for the Eastern manuscripts held by the library, *Oriental Manuscripts in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*. Earlier volumes in this series covered Mongol and Manchu manuscripts and block prints (2000), Turkish manuscripts (2007), Tibetan manuscripts and block prints (2008-9), and Arabic manuscripts (2016).

The Persian manuscripts of the library (155 volumes carrying 170 titles) comprise the most significant such collection in Hungary, and in this volume they are treated comprehensively in a publicly accessible printed catalogue for the first time. The volume's catalogue entries are based on descriptions prepared for the library's online catalogue during a project undertaken in cooperation with the Specialized Library of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran (LPIS) and supported by the Islamic Manuscript Association (TIMA). This valuable database of searchable bibliographic and codicological data for the Persian manuscripts has been freely accessible via the library's website since 2017.¹

¹Guidance under "Catalogs" on the library's English site (https://konyvtar.mta.hu/index_en.php?name=v_4) directs researchers to the manuscript data in the online catalogue via various access points, including a direct link to the entire listing of Persian manuscripts (http://opac.mtak.hu/F/?func=find-c&ccl_term=WBS=PERS).