

Translation policies in Western Europe (18th-20th centuries): Interdisciplinary perspectives

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This special issue of *Parallèles* presents the revised papers of an international and interdisciplinary workshop held at the University of Mainz in Germersheim, Germany, in connection with the project on “Translation policies in/for Belgium during the French period” (financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft). The intention of the workshop was to bring together translation scholars, linguists, historians and historians of law. The contributions deal with translation policies during the “long 19th century”, from the French Revolution to the beginning of World War I, in Western Europe, especially Belgium, and beyond. The analyses in this special issue deal with translation policy in the sense of official or semi-official translations of administrative, legal and political texts in the context of multilingual and/or expanding European nation states.¹ The special issue includes the following papers:

Sylvie Kleinman (Trinity College Dublin) describes the translation practices by Irish revolutionaries in France, between 1793 and 1805, as a “practice before policy”. The analysis is exemplified by the activities of two Irishmen working for the translation office of the French government.

Lieven D’hulst (KU Leuven) introduces a section of papers dealing with translation policies in (what today is called) Belgium. D’hulst describes the fairly under-researched situation during the last decades of the Austrian period (1748-1792) and compares it to the better known translation policy of the French revolutionaries during the subsequent French period in Belgium (1795-1815).

Caroline Ingelbeen and Michael Schreiber (Mainz University) present the outlines of a research project on the translation policy in Belgium during the so-called French period. They present bilingual documents found in Belgian archives, focusing on legal and administrative texts. Some of the typical features of the translations in the fields of vocabulary and text structure are illustrated in the paper.

¹ For other types and conceptions of translation policy, see Meylaerts (2011), González Nuñez (2016) and D’hulst, O’Sullivan, & Schreiber (2016).

The next paper offers both a theoretical and a historical perspective. Reine Meylaerts (KU Leuven) discusses translation policy within the context of Complexity Theory. This is exemplified by developments in Belgium during the 19th century, focussing on the evolution of democratic citizenship in a multilingual context.

Sebastiaan Vandebogaerde (Ghent University) discusses the role of translations for the development of a Flemish legal language as exemplified by Flemish legal journals during the second half of the 19th century. According to Vandebogaerde, legal periodicals were an important instrument for the design of a legal terminology in the Flemish language, based on translations from French into Flemish.

Valérie Dullion (University of Geneva) analyzes the translations of judgments in four Swiss law journals during the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Translation policy is seen here as a regime for the translation of legal texts within legal circles.

Finally, Sylvain Soleil (University of Rennes) widens the geographical perspective, discussing terminological problems within the codification processes in Bessarabia and Japan during the 19th century. Here, the French language was used as the drafting language of the new codes and the source for a new legal terminology in Russian, Moldovan and Japanese.

References

- D'hulst, L., O'Sullivan, C., & Schreiber, M. (Eds.). (2016). *Politics, policy and power in translation history*. Berlin: Frank & Timme.
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- Meylaerts, R. (2011). Translation policy. In Y. Gambier & L. van Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies. Volume 2* (pp. 163-168). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
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