

Translators as Agents: Jewish Translators and Zsolnay Publishing House's Translational Culture in Pre-Anschluss Austria, 1924-1938

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Abstract : The role of the translator in the publishing process has been underestimated for centuries. Any translation is produced in a certain socio-political context by agents with different background, interests, and opinions, i.e., no translation is neutral. Any translation goes beyond the text; it is not only an interlingual transfer of signs but a social phenomenon. The case study shows how Jewish social networks influence publishing translations and aims to explain the unexpected success of the Jewish publishing house in pre-Anschluss Austria. The research shows that translators play a central role ('Translator's visibility' - Pym, 'Activist turn' - Wolf, 'Translator studies' - Chesterman) in choosing what has to be translated and establishing communication between the author and the publisher. The concept of Translationskultur of Prunc is being historized and applied to the publishing house for the first time by analyzing business correspondence between the main actors of translation (publisher-translator-author). The translation studies project has become interdisciplinary -it encompasses sociology (concepts of Bourdieu's 'Field theory' are used) and history. The historical research method Histoire croisée is being used to avoid subjectivity and to introduce a new 'translator-oriented' vision in translation studies instead of the author-oriented one. In the course of the archival research, it was established that Jewish background plays an essential role in the destiny of the translators and the publishing house, so the Jewish studies have been added to the project. The study goes beyond the Austrian translational culture; it can be used as an example of dealing with publishing houses policies, publishing translations, and translator studies.

Keywords : history of translation, Jewish studies, publishing translations, translation sociology, translator studies, translators as actors

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