Robert France and Kenneth Haynes, eds. *The Oxford history of literary translation in English,* Vol. 4*: 1790–1900*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006. xvi + 595 pp. ISBN 978-0-19-924623-6. 150 USD.

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From the *Oxford history of English literature*, I have learned to expect chapters on background, on each major writer, on groups of minor writers or literary genres, broadly understood, or on both, plus brief bibliographies (usually selected) of topics and of individual writers in Great Britain, arranged with an eye to rough chronology but without a recognizable basis in a consistent concept of (literary) history. The 41 contributors to volume 4 of *OHLTE* offer a reasonable parallel, adapted to the current state of research: with much less emphasis on major figures but including 108 bio-bibliographical sketches of individual translators. There is fairly extensive in-text documentation, though the rather consistent exclusion of studies appearing outside English language areas sometimes results in a much less informed representation than would otherwise be possible. Despite an overview over "Translation in the United States" (pp. 20–33) and a dozen or so bio-bibliographical sketches, only marginal treatment is accorded to trans-Atlantic matters. The largest section is organized by languages or groups of languages, formed either by linguistic or pragmatic criteria, from which translations have been made: Chapter 5 on Greek and Latin Literature discusses Homer, Greek drama, Latin poetry, and Greek and Latin prose. The corresponding Chapter on Medieval and Modern Europe is devoted to German, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, Early Literature of the North, Modern Scandinavian, Celtic, and Literatures of Central and Eastern Europe. Eastern Literatures are represented by Arabic, Persian, Literatures of the Indian Subcontinent, Chinese, and Japanese. Popular culture, texts for music, sacred and religious texts, and philosophy, history and travel writings are grouped by category. As a consequence, individual translators appear, much of the time, in more chapters than one, divided up according to general tendency.

The introductory section consists of general discussions of translation in Britain and the United States, of principles and norms of translation, and of types of translators, and includes selected statistics on the publication of literary translations.

When reading the sub-chapter on translation in British literary culture, I kept track of the various uses of translation on record: to serve as authors' apprenticeship, to adopt styles, to import ideas and schemas (in the classical sense of verse

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or stanza patterns), to incorporate allusions and even lengthy translated passages into one's own work (resolved: drop the term "original work"), and to enlarge the scope of English literature; there was also mention of the "major appropriation" of German poetry. I wonder whether, as in the German countries in the nineteenth century, translations in Great Britain were also used to render — or simply rendered — images of foreign countries and peoples.

The companion sub-chapter on the United States notes, among other things, that there was, in the early nineteenth century, a shift away from a major interest in French literature and culture towards "German Romanticism" (add "German Idealist Philosophy"), especially because of its "dual attempt to create a national German literature, and to make that German literature part of a broader world literature" (p. 22). Fair enough. But the research of K. Mueller-Vollmer, published in English in the 1990s and collected and expanded in A.P. Frank & K.M.-V.'s *The internationality of national literatures in either America: Transfer and transformation*, vol. 2 (2000), together with other recent publications in German, show, in great detail, the uses to which German literature was put in writing U.S. American literature away from its British counterpart. A characteristic case is the launching of G. Ripley's series, *Specimens of foreign standard literature*, in 1838, for the express purpose of providing translations that served American objectives, rather than to continue adopting those that were made overseas in view of British ends. What was also missed is F. Lieber's making of the first *Encyclopedia Americana* (1829–1832) by translating, rewriting, and expanding the Brockhaus *Conversations-Lexicon* (7th edition) — a major cultural project if there ever was one. Incidentally, C.D. Ebeling, whose private collection of Americana went to Harvard, was not really a "Hamburg merchant" but a professor of political geography and, for a time, university librarian at Göttingen.

The sub-chapter on "Translation, politics, and the law" touches on matters such as translation in relation to levels of knowledge, imperialism, copyright, and obscenity laws. Despite — or, rather, because of — a number of studies that deal with "questions of assimilation and misrepresentation through translation" (p. 49), I am hesitant about the "mis" in "misrepresentation". What is the norm by which a translation is judged as a misrepresentation? If it is a back-projection of the current critic's views on the subject-matter of the respective work and its translation, it does not do much more than add a crooked mirror to a corridor of crooked mirrors to which a next generation is likely to add yet another, *ad lib.* A sad case in point is T. Niranjana's *Siting translation* (1992), cited in this sub-chapter. What can one expect when an author begins to construe a view of Western thought by claiming, in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, that "Reality", in Western philosophy, "is seen as something unproblematic, 'out there'" (p. 2) and continues her representation by positing that historicism "really represents as

natural that which is *historical*" (p. 10). Is it too much to expect of a contemporary author who theorizes on translation to be conversant with late eighteenth-century translation theory, when one of the — hermeneutic — arguments against translatability was that of the inevitable *differences* between two historical moments? Perhaps, but then a comprehensive dictionary of the history of ideas (P.P. Wiener's, for instance) would have shown, at a glance, that there is a strong tendency, in European thought, to play off "historicism" (the study of all things, including nature, under the perspective of change) against "naturism" (the attempt to understand all things, including human affairs, statically). The safer working hypothesis is to posit that translators try to represent truly, given their particular possibilities to know, their concepts of what makes for a good and correct translation, substantive or time limits or both imposed by publishers, etc. It will then be possible to understand the particularities of the given translation in terms of the limiting conditions of the particular translator's work at the particular time and place.

The Chapter on "[Complex] principles and norms of translation" strikes me as keenly argued: by working the concepts of "norm" and "principle" against each other, by giving instances of how the implicit redefinition, in pronouncements on translating and translations, of terms used and defined by Tytler indicate historical distance, by suggesting how a translator's style can pay respect to, and depict, national differences, etc. I am not quite convinced, though, that Carlyle's kind of "literal translation" actually shows what the translated author's style "is in German" (p. 71). Instructed by Schleiermacher, I prefer to argue that Carlyle's grammatical translation can only show how the author's German looked to the *translator*. Furthermore, since more kinds of function words — most notably articles — are gendered in German than in English, such a translation tends to appear, at least to me, as a more extreme case in its context of standard English than does the source text in its German environment. This different awareness is, no doubt, in part due to different reading experiences. A particularly interesting sub-section is "The translator translated", dealing as it does with such phenomena as transgendering and the mutability of the translating self.

Still on to such things as norms and principles, I wonder whether there were appreciable differences in terms of translational *domain*, as was customary in the German countries of the early and middle nineteenth century when, for instance, British poetry tended to be translated, and the translations discussed, as individual writers' contributions, due, no doubt, to a marked interest in, and familiarity with, British literature whereas the custom for Scandinavian poetry was imagological: to focus on what was thought to be characteristic of the countries and the nations. Perhaps such distinctions are easier to find as soon as one looks for specific customs instead of across-the-board norms. And I am confident that principles look less complex as soon as one compares an individual translator's habits when

translating from language A rather than B. What I should also like to learn are facts and channels of the importation of ideas on translating from other countries.

The Chapter on "Translators" is important; its writing, I'm afraid, must have been a thankless job because the five groups — professionals, amateurs and enthusiasts, "major" (p. 109) writers, academics, and women — overlap considerably (p. 83), and, therefore, do not permit reasonable generalizations. Shelley, for instance, discussed under *writer*, was, if anything, an enthusiast of translating — as well as of other pursuits. Longfellow — the only American discussed at some length here is C.E. Norton — has probably fallen through the grid because three-and-a-half categories apply: He was an eminently successful writer during his life-time but is now not, as a rule, regarded as major; one of the pens he wielded to make a living was the translator's; he was one of the first U.S. American men of letters to make a distinguished university career; all this would certainly have been impossible without a large share of enthusiasm. I note, with interest, that, unlike on the continent, there were no translation "ateliers" or "factories" in nineteenth-century Britain.

Together with volume 3 in the series, Peter France and his team have provided a comprehensive documentation of nearly two and a half centuries of translating in Great Britain. While not quite a history, the work makes most of the material accessible from which, together with indigenous British writing and forms of rewriting other than translation, it is now possible to synthesize a history of writing in Great Britain, 1760–1900, in its international correlations. Here's to a next generation and an *Oxford international history of British literature.*

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