

การศึกษาค้นคว้าความเป็นมาและทฤษฎีของการแปล  
Beyond Babbling Babel: A Survey of the History  
and Theory of Translation

Rapin Subaneg  
ระพิน ทรัพย์อเนก\*

**ABSTRACT**

In this paper, the researcher initiates a long-term project dedicated to the history and theory of translation, especially as it pertains to the situation in Southeast Asia and the Kingdom of Thailand in particular. Salient issues and questions are best initially addressed in a comparative framework showing how the work of translation has evolved in particularly historically crucial periods and under certain conditions. The conclusion stresses the need to address what “tools” are needed for translations in the epoch of globalization in brief compass.

---

\* Associat Professor, Ramkhamhaeng Institute of Languages, Ramkhamhaeng University rapins\_ram@hotmail.com

## บทคัดย่อ

ผู้วิจัยศึกษาประวัติความเป็นมาและทฤษฎีที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการแปล โดยเฉพาะที่เกี่ยวข้องกับเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้และราชอาณาจักรไทย ประเด็นที่ศึกษาเป็นการแสดงให้เห็นว่า การแปลมีความเป็นมาอย่างไรในช่วงเวลาสำคัญในอดีตและในสถานการณ์ต่างๆ บทสรุปของงานวิจัยเป็นที่ความจำเป็นที่จะต้องหาเครื่องมือเพื่อช่วยในการแปลในยุคโลกาภิวัตน์นี้

It could be said that the common ground upon which European thought is based, reflects the labors, over the centuries, of a vast army of translators, most of them toiling in the background unrecognized. As the American author Paul Auster so elegantly puts it: “Translators are the shadow heroes of literature, the often forgotten instruments that make it possible for different cultures to talk to one another” (Auster, 2007). This is true not only of the humanities and the need to communicate the vast body of philosophy, literature and thought through the art of translation; it is also of vital relevance in the field of international politics and commerce as well. Without translators, Europe as a

geopolitical entity would not exist; these largely anonymous individuals toil away in the background, continuing to perform a vital function by keeping the wheels of the EU, the European Union, turning around the clock. In that sense, many (among them the world-famous Czech writer Milan Kundera as one can see from his resounding support for the profession as a whole) feel that these anonymous translators are more important than the members of the European Parliament itself (Kundera, 2010).

It goes without saying that this in turn holds a valuable lesson for those of us living here in Southeast Asia, as we stand on the threshold of realizing ASEAN 2015. Although it has already been decided that the *lingua franca* of ASEAN will be English, much of the regional trade agreements will also require a vast number of translators, skilled at translating both legal and commercial documents from English into their respective native tongues and vice-versa. In addition, as all of you here are no doubt already painfully aware, it is often a requirement that master's theses and doctoral dissertations, both here and elsewhere

in ASEAN, be written in English, which for many of you will involve translating and communicating ideas conceived largely in Thai and then translating from this Thai into English. To do this successfully, you need to be aware of the various factors, and the complexities that are involved in translating from the source language (SL) (for most of you that will be Thai, of course) into the target language (or TL as it is known), most likely English. And it's these factors that we're going to be examining in the light of the history and theory of translation both East and West.

It is obvious that in both East and West the matter of language and translation is of vast importance. However, as we know, translation has had a very long history throughout much of the world and it is nowadays an issue of paramount saliency. Furthermore, in the view of the researcher, it is important to examine some of the mountain peaks in the history of translation in different cultural spheres, especially since translation theory has usually arisen in times in history when it was felt urgent to do effective translation work for urgent reasons ranging from the

needs of commerce, industry and war to the requirements of science, literature and of course religion. The past is never really dead and so those of us engaged in translation work today have much to learn from both the achievements and the failures of the past. Therefore, in what follows the reader will find that discussion and analysis follow a rough historical order discussing translation and its theory as it arose in European civilization, the Islamic world, the Indian subcontinent and East Asia.

In the course of the long evolution of human culture, early on the need emerged to learn other languages and with it the need for translators and interpreters to make sense of all the ensuing babble—a word which has been erroneously connected by folk etymology with the name of the ill-fated Tower of Babel in a story in the Old Testament book of Genesis in which massive miscommunication ensued because of the use of multiple languages—in order to oil the wheels of commerce and intercultural exchange but the error itself is illuminating, as will be seen later (“Origin”, n.d.). Notice that as we move ever further from the age of ancient

Babylon and the mythical Tower of Babel to the age of Babel Fish (and other computerized translation services such as Google Translate, Reverso etc.) there still remains an ever-growing need for translation and the skills of competent translators. Again, as the Internet spreads, and globalization gathers momentum—the need for translation continues to increase apace. Language schools and courses may help you to learn a foreign language, but theorists throughout the ages have insisted that a good translator must not only be conversant with the target language but possess a thorough understanding of the culture from which they are translating (Steiner, 2008).

What exactly is translation? Webster's New International Dictionary defines "to translate" as follows: "To put into the words of a different language; to change into another medium or form to translate ideas into action; to put into different words; rephrase or paraphrase in explanation" ("Translate", n.d.). To put this helpful definition into context, let us examine the word "translation" in a wider setting. The word translation itself is derived from a Latin

term meaning "to bring or carry across". The Ancient Greek term for this is '*metaphrasis*' ("to speak across"), which gives us the term '*metaphrase*' (a "literal or word-for-word translation")—in contrast to '*paraphrase*' ("saying the same thing, but using other words to do so") (Danlinguistic, 2013). This distinction has lain at the heart of the theory of translation throughout its entire history in western culture: Cicero and Horace employed it in Rome, Dryden, the English poet, literary critic, translator, and playwright, continued to use it in the seventeenth century (Ran, 2009), and it still exists today in the debates relating to "fidelity versus transparency" or "formal equivalence versus dynamic equivalence" ("Equivalence: Formal and Dynamic", 2000, p. 415).

At roughly the same time Roman poets were busy adapting Greek texts into Latin, in the Far East, a tectonic shift of another kind was quietly underway, one that was to exert a profound change in the cultural landscape of the region as a whole. Again, it was an effort spearheaded by translators, in this case learned Buddhist monks, who made the long and dangerous pilgrimage from China to India to

collect Buddhist sutras and other Buddhist texts (mainly, but not exclusively Mahāyāna in nature) with the aim of translating them into their native Chinese. These included such revered figures as Dharmarakṣa (A.D. 223-300), who was known as ZhúFāhù in Chinese. This famed Buddhist scholar translated the Lotus Sutra into Chinese among other works (Boucher, 2006).

Another revered scholar and translator was Kumārajīva (Chinese: Jiūmóluóshí), who is mostly remembered for his prolific translation of Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Chinese. A Buddhist monk, scholar, and translator, born in Kucha, an oasis on the Silk Road, he first studied the teachings of the Sarvāstivāda schools, later studying under Buddhasvāmin, a celebrated Sarvāstivādan Buddhist monk and famous scholar (also from the kingdom of Kucha), before finally becoming a follower of the Mahāyāna tradition. Among the most important texts translated by Kumārajīva are the Diamond Sutra, the Amitabha Sutra, and the Lotus Sutra (“Kumarajiva”, n.d.). It was upon Kumārajīva's translation of the Lotus Sutra in fact that Nichiren based

his reformation movement in 13th-century Japan, leading in turn to such modern Buddhist movements as the SōkaGakkai—a perfect example of the sometimes unforeseen (and long-reaching) impact of the translator’s art (“The Lotus”, 2002).

Another outstanding individual to undertake the long and arduous journey to India was Xuanzang, who was to return sixteen years later with a treasure trove of around 657 Buddhist texts that he set about translating from Sanskrit into his native Chinese. By the time of his death in 664, he had translated fewer than 80, including the Heart Sutra and the Diamond Sutra. He also translated into Sanskrit the *Dàodéjīng* (earlier romanized as *Tao TeChing*, among other romanizations) traditionally attributed to the perhaps mythical Lǎozi. Xuanzang sent a copy of his translation to India in 647 (Lee, n.d.). Perhaps you do not recognize his name, though you would be more likely to remember him in his fictional form (Yuen, n.d.) as the central character, Sun Wukong (Thai name: HengChia) or the Monkey King in Wu Cheng’en’s 16th-century novel *Journey to the West* (Wu, 2005), the title its original English translator, the redoubtable Arthur Waley (1899-1966),

pioneering translator of classical Chinese and Japanese texts, chose for it (“Getting Started”, n.d., para. 2).

Chang'an (Xi'an), the Tang dynasty capital, to which Xuanzang returned in 645, became renowned as a center for Buddhist studies, attracting monks from as far away as Japan and Korea, who would make the journey to Chang'an with the sole purpose of becoming the disciples of Xuanzang, later returning to their homelands to spread the Buddhist teachings contained in the texts that had been brought all the way from India and translated so meticulously and with such loving care (“Xi'an/Chang'an”, n.d.).

Just as in the case of the Far East, religious texts have played a great role in the history of translation in the West. It thus comes as no surprise that one of the first recorded examples of translation in the West was the rendering of the Hebrew Old Testament (“A Brief History of the Hebrew Language”, n.d.) and related texts into Kōine Greek (“History of the Greek Language”, n.d.), the *lingua franca* of the Levant and the Mediterranean Sea area. This

3rd century BCE translation was carried out by a group of seventy Jewish scholars residing in the cosmopolitan city of Alexandria (Satterfield, 2010). Thus, the common name for this translation is Septuagint, a word derived from the Latin word *septuaginta* meaning seventy (Hengel, 2002). In turn, this translation became the basis for translations into other languages as well. Consequently, the next period to mark a quantum leap in the field of translation (and the enormous influence it wielded) came in the 4th century CE with a new translation of the Bible into Latin by Saint Jerome, who went on to become the patron saint of translators, called the Vulgate, since the “version commonly used” (Latin: *versio vulgate*) (Steinmueller, n.d.). In this enormous labor, Jerome translated almost all of both the Old Testament Hebrew Bible—even though there are differences between Roman Catholics, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox believers as to what constitutes the canon—and the New Testament Greek (Kōine) into Latin, thereby establishing the standard Latin Bible for the Roman Catholic Church in the sixteenth century at the time of the Counter-Reformation (Kenyon, 1939).

In the early modern period, translations of the Bible into English began to appear in spite of strong opposition from the Roman Catholic Church. Important translations were printed in English in this period. John Wycliffe's translation was printed in 1382 with additions by his assistants printed in 1388 and 1395 (Calhoun, 2012). Another important early modern English translation of the New Testament was William Tyndale's version printed in 1525 (Kenyon, 1964).

One of the hallmarks of the Protestant Reformation as a revolt against the authority of the Roman Catholic Church was its insistence that the Bible be translated into the vernacular, i.e., into local European languages. It was this, among other things, which eventually led to European Christendom splitting into Roman Catholicism and Protestantism as reflected by disparities between Protestant and Roman Catholic interpretations of crucial words and passages ("Protestant Reformation", n.d.). Martin Luther, perhaps the dominant figure in the Protestant Reformation, published his own German translation of the New Testament

in 1521, followed in 1534 by his German translation of the Old Testament (Luther, 1530). He is also credited with being the first European to propose that one translates satisfactorily only toward his own language: a statement that is just as true in modern translation theory and practice today (Schaff, 1910).

Later on, the translation of the Bible remained subject to many conflicts between western theories and ideologies of translation and would remain so for more than a thousand years. Moreover, these conflicts over Bible translation were intensified with the coming of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, such as in the case of Luther, when "translation came to be used as a weapon in both dogmatic and political conflicts as nation states began to emerge and the centralization of the Church started to weaken, evidenced in linguistic terms by the decline of Latin as a universal language" (Bassnett-McGuire, 1980, p. 4).

Needless to say, the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century created a market for printed work of all kinds, which in turn helped to boost the field of

translation and ushered in the appearance of early theorists (Kramer, 2011). It was not without its dangers, however, as we can see from the case of Étienne Dolet (1509-1546), the French humanist, scholar, and printer whose allegedly heretical mistranslation of a phrase in one of Plato's dialogues as "*rien du tout*" ("nothing left at all") that was said to have shown his disbelief in immortality. This charge was at least one of the factors that led to his execution by being burned at the stake (Hermans, n.d., p. 2).

The first coherent theory of document translation was composed by the aforementioned Étienne Dolet in 1540 in his seminal work "*La Manière de Bien Traduire d'une Langue en Aultre*" ("The Correct Way to Translate One Language to Another"). The basic principles he set forth in this monumental document have not changed down through the ages, and have evolved into the three basic concepts behind all translation, which can be summarized in terms of the following three simple rules (Hermans, n.d., p. 1):

The translator must possess a perfect comprehension of the source language.

The translator must possess an equally perfect comprehension of the target language.

The translator must be knowledgeable in the subject matter.

Juan Daniel Pérez Vallejo well puts the matter in his article on “Translation Theory” in respect to the first two precepts: “The translator should have a perfect knowledge of the language from which he is translating and an equally excellent knowledge of the language into which he is translating.” His or her knowledge of both languages must be extensive enough to select the equivalent expression in the target language. Vallejo goes on to point out that any deficiency in the translator’s knowledge of either language will “result in a translation without logic and sense”(“Vallejo,” as cited in Furdaus, “Abstract,”n.d.).

Moreover, these three precepts are universal in terms of their application: Since the stated purpose of any translation is to take the meaning of a source document and carry that meaning over into the target language, the translator needs to have a crystal-clear understanding of

these three constituent parts of the equation in order to achieve this goal.

The predominant idea these days, at least as far as business translation is concerned, is simply to concentrate on content and meaning. In other words, once you understand the content of the source document, you simply re-cast it in the target language using your own comprehension. The translator is free to attempt to try to maintain a similarity of style, but the main goal is simply the transference of information from one language to the other. That approach works well enough in the field of commerce, of course, but wouldn't with a work of literature, or a complex treatise on art or philosophy, for instance.

Dolet, along with John Dryden and Alexander Fraser Tytler, is credited with being in the vanguard of modern translation theory in that they were among the first translators who tried to fashion some working principles and typologies regarding the fundamental nature of translation and its requirements. Although their pronouncements may

seem outdated by current post-structuralist and post-colonialist theorists, they can only—in all fairness—be evaluated in the framework of the historical context which shaped them.

The ideas put forward by Dolet, Dryden and Tytler have a number of features in common which can be listed as follows:

1. They are source-oriented. All the alternative strategies they advise are for the sake of the original.

"The translator will neither corrupt nor diminish the majesty of either language" (Dolet,1540, cited in Powell, n.d., p. 44).

In addition, the translation should represent a complete account of the ideas contained in the original work.

"The style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original. The translation should have all the ease of an original composition" (Tytler, 1791) (Tytler, 1900, p. 9).

2. They are prescriptive. They give the rules, principles and guidelines of "good", "ideal" translation to would-be translators.
3. They overlook the influence of social, political, economic and ideological factors involved in the task of translation, which they view as a purely linguistic activity.
4. They lay down strict guidelines and clear-cut categories regarding the translation process. For example, Dryden divides translation into three types, namely: metaphrase, paraphrase and imitation (Hopkins, 2013, p. 8).

Despite any limitations or flaws we may find from a contemporary perspective, the ideas of these three translators are significant in the history of translation theories, because they create a meta-thinking on translation and consider translation as an object of research and study. Also, they determine certain rules and principles which subsequent generations will either brush aside or upon which they will build and elaborate. Interestingly, they also

allude to the issue of the status of translators and the problems that they face. Dryden, for instance, remarks that

"We are bound to our author's sense...for I think it not so sacred...But slaves we are, and labour on another man's plantation; we dress the vineyard, but the wine is the owner's...Being obliged to make his sense intelligible, we are forced to untune our own verses..." (Dryden, 1695) (Dryden, "A Parallel of Poetry and Painting", 1949, p. 232).

The seventeenth century witnessed the birth of a number of influential theorists such as Sir John Denham (1615-69), Abraham Cowley (1618-67), Alexander Pope (1688-1744), and John Dryden (1631-1700), who—as mentioned earlier—was famous for his distinction between three types of translation; metaphrase, paraphrase and imitation (Zakhir, "History of Translation," n.d., para. 7).

In the eighteenth century, the translator was elevated in status, often being compared to an artist with a moral duty both to the work of the original author and to the receiver. Moreover, new theories and volumes regarding

the translation process began to appear, thereby rendering the study of translation far more systematic, Alexander Fraser Tytler's volume "Principles of Translation" (1791) being a case in point (Sánchez, 2007).

The nineteenth century was marked by two diametrically opposed perspectives regarding the role of a translator; "the first considered translation as a category of thought and saw the translator as a creative genius, who enriches the literature and language into which he is translating, while the second saw him through the mechanical function of making a text or an author known" (Bassnett-McGuire, 1980, p. 5).

The nineteenth century also gave rise to Romanticism in all the arts, a phenomenon that gave birth to countless theories and translations in the domain of literature, especially in the field of poetic translation. An example of these translations is the one by Edward Fitzgerald (1809-1863) for 'The Rubaiyat of Omar Al-Khayyam' (1858), which took enormous liberties with the original to the point where the translator ended up creating a work that was more his

own than an accurate reflection of the work of the 11th-century Persian mathematician, astronomer and poet. (Fitzgerald, 1905). Nevertheless, the popularity of Fitzgerald's version of 'The Rubaiyat' sparked renewed interest in Omar Khayyám's poetry in his native Persia, resulting in a number of translations of his work into modern Persian (Farsi) (Aminrazavi & Van Brummelen, 2011).

By the time of the second half of the twentieth century, studies on translation had become an important part of the curriculum in the teaching and learning of languages in schools. As the century progressed, language learners interested in the art of translation were faced with a bewildering variety of methods and models of translation to choose from. The grammar-translation method, for instance, focused on the grammatical rules and structures of foreign languages, although it has been largely discredited as a stand-alone approach. The cultural model, on the other hand, bears witness to the more sophisticated development of translation studies during this period in that it required in translation not only a word-for-word substitution, but also a

cultural understanding of the way people in different societies think (Mehrach, 1977, p. 6).

Another model that appears in this period is the text-based translation model, which focuses on texts rather than words or sentences in the translation process. This model includes a variety of sub-models: the interpretative model, the text linguistic model and models of translation quality assessments that in turn spawned yet more models, too numerous to mention within this undertaking.

The period is also characterized by a pragmatic and systematic approach to the study of translation. The most famous writings and figures that characterize the twentieth century are those of Jean-Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet, who worked on a stylistic comparative study of French and English (1958), Alfred Malblanc (1963), George Mounin (1963), John C. Catford (1965), and Eugene Nida (1964), who is affected by Chomsky's generative grammar in his theories of translation (Munday, 2012). Finally, Robert Alain de Beaugrand, writes prolifically about translation (de

Beaugrand, 1996), and there are many others who worked and still work within this domain.

Nowadays, translation research has started to take yet another path, one which is more automatic (Bar-Hillel, 1960). The invention of the Internet, together with the new technological developments in communication and digital materials (“Machine Translation”, Jan. 5th 2013) has boosted the volume of cultural exchanges between nations, prompting translators to seek new ways to cope with such dramatic changes and to seek out more practical techniques that will enable them to ply their trade more effectively (“Machine Translation Archive”, 2014).

In short, translation has a very wide and rich history in the West. Since its birth, translation has been the subject of a variety of research studies and fierce debate between theorists. Each theorist approaches it according to his own particular viewpoint and field of research, a fact that has given its history a distinctly variegated quality.

Sometimes, however, the waters of the translator’s domain can easily become muddied with too much theory;

sometimes, as Peter Fawcett, author of *Translation and Language: Linguistic Theories Explained* remarks, it can all come down to a simple feeling, albeit one nurtured by years of experience developing what the Germans call “*Sprachgefühl*”—a real feeling for the language. This is where theory takes a back seat to one’s linguistic intuition, or when, as he puts it: Translation quality assessment proceeds according to the lordly, completely unexplained, whimsy of “it doesn’t sound quite right” (Fawcett, 1981, p. 120).

Let us turn now to the unique approaches to translation found in the medieval Arab world. In an article entitled ‘Medieval Arabic Translation: Rise and Decline’, the Arab scholar Omar Jabak accords translation a central role in expanding the frontiers of human knowledge, highlighting the fact that “There is no denying the fact that knowledge is a collective pursuit to which all cultures, past and present, have contributed.” He then goes on to draw the reader’s attention to the fact that “a great deal of this knowledge is preserved and augmented through a highly creative and rigorous process, namely that of translation” (Jabak, n.d.).

In this respect, it is definitely worth taking the time to examine the tremendous contribution that medieval Arabic translators made to the development and preservation of a vast store of human knowledge that would otherwise have remained lost.

It is no exaggeration, in fact, that the monumental task of translation—as undertaken by the Arabs—kept the vast store of Greek wisdom and learning alive. Having conquered the Greek world, they then set about making Arabic versions of its major philosophical and scientific works, which were subsequently housed in one of the little-known wonders of the medieval world the House of Wisdom in Baghdad. During the Middle Ages, translations of these Arabic versions were made into Latin—mainly at the school established by the Arabs in Córdoba, Spain. It was these Latin translations of Greek texts, together with original Arab works of learning, which were to prove so invaluable in that they helped to re-energize and underpin Western art and scholarship during the great flowering of European culture soon to burst upon the world at large, one of the

great creative ages of man, known to us as the Renaissance (Jabak, n.d.).

For centuries following the fall of Rome, Western Europe gradually slipped into what was to become known as the ‘Dark Ages’, a term that was supposed to reflect the cultural and economic deterioration that occurred in Western Europe after the decline of the Roman Empire. Originally the term characterized the bulk of the Middle Ages, or roughly the 6th to 13th centuries, as a period of intellectual darkness that would only be broken with the rise of the Italian Renaissance in the 14th century. Europe was viewed as a place suffering from severe stagnation, a world of subsistence farming, minimal literacy, and violent conflict. Meanwhile, on the other hand, Arab culture was flourishing, dazzling those Europeans fortunate enough to visit its great cities like Baghdad or Antioch. There, philosophers, mathematicians, and astronomers were steadily advancing the frontiers of knowledge, as well as keeping alive the works of Plato and Aristotle. At a time when even the best libraries in Europe held several dozen

books at most, Baghdad's great library, The House of Wisdom, housed four hundred thousand. Many of these books would show just how large a debt “Western” ideas owe to what is known as the Golden Age of Arab civilization (Monacal, 2005).

Even while their countrymen waged bloody Crusades against Muslims in the Holy Land, a handful of intrepid Christian scholars, hungry for knowledge, traveled East and returned with treasures beyond price, treasures in the form of knowledge—of science, medicine, and philosophy—that were to lay the foundation for the Renaissance. So, for one all-too-brief period in history, Christian Europe was able to drink from the well of Muslim learning.

The Bayt al-Hikma, or 'House of Wisdom', was a scientific institution founded in Baghdad by the caliph al-Ma'mun. In existence from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries, its principal activity was the translation of philosophical and scientific works from the Greek originals which, according to tradition, a delegation sent by the caliph had brought from the country of Rum (Rome). It employed a

huge number of translators, of whom the most famous were the Banul-Munadhhdhim, as well as copyists and binders. It appears in fact that the library as it stood had already existed in the time of al-Rashid, when work had already begun on translating a number of works from the Greek. Al-Ma'mun may only have given a new impetus to this movement, which was to exert a considerable influence on the development of Islamic thought and culture (Al-Azzawi, n.d.). While the Umayyads of both Damascus and Cordoba hungered for new knowledge, they were culturally voracious and syncretistic, it was not they but the Abbasids of Baghdad who sponsored the astonishing multigenerational project to translate major portions of the Greek philosophical and scientific canon without which, arguably, much of that canon might have been permanently lost to humanity (Monacal, 2005).

Furthermore, since the time of the Prophet Mohamed, translation had played a major role in the history and growth of Islam. The rapid spread of Islam and the subsequent need for communication with non-Arabic speaking communities, such as the Jews, Romans and

others, prompted the Prophet to look for capable translators and to encourage the learning of foreign languages. One of the most famous translators of the time was Zaydibn Thabet, who played a crucial role in translating letters sent by the prophet to the foreign kings of Persia, Syria, Rome and to the Jews, and also letters sent by those kings to the prophet ("ZaydibnThabit ", n.d.)

Another era that witnessed important developments in Arab translation was that of 'the first Abbasid period' (750-1250). The translation movement in 9th-century Baghdad was formed by the needs of the rulers of a powerful empire. The trading networks which played such a crucial role in the development of this vast Muslim empire were able to carry new ideas to far-flung corners of the world. Another important factor in the astounding success enjoyed by this vast network of Medieval Arabic translators was the generous financial support that the Abbasid rulers set aside for the task of translation (Wiet, n.d.). Not surprisingly, therefore, the post of a translator was one of the most lucrative and most prestigious jobs available, and so it

attracted the finest scholars. One of the dynasty's founders, Harun al-Rashid, for example, would send scholars to different parts of the world in the quest for knowledge and manuscripts to be translated into Arabic. This mission would then be taken up by his son, al-Mamoun, who would recruit the cream of the empire's scholars and translators to undertake his project of disseminating knowledge by establishing the House of Wisdom already discussed. According to Omar Jabak, "During his reign, translators were given the best and highest positions in the administration due to their industrious efforts to enrich the Muslim and Arab heritage with new branches of knowledge" (Jabak, n.d.).

During this period, translators focused on Greek philosophy, Indian science and Persian literature, an especially noteworthy translator being Al-Kasimi. The dissemination of the translated versions was greatly facilitated by the introduction of paper-making from China, local production being centred in Baghdad. From there, the process spread to Al-Andalus, the southern part of Spain

that was controlled by its Moslem conquerors, and from there to other parts of the West (Zakhir, n.d.).

The Arab history of translation is also characterized by the name of Al-Jahid (868-577), one of the greatest translation theorists of his day. In fact, his theories and writings pertaining to the field of translation are still used today by many professional Arab translators. According to Al-Jahid, "the translator should know the structure of the speech, habits of the people and their ways of understanding each other," observations, as already noted, that were echoed by many of his Western peers (Al-Jahid, as cited in Zakhir, n.d.). Furthermore, it is worth taking note of the fact that there were two main methods that were favored in Arabic translation; the first belongs to Yohanalbn Al-Batriq and IbnNaima Al-Himsi, and is based on literal translation, whereby each Greek word was translated by its equivalent word in Arabic, while the second refers to the approach favored by HunaynIbnIshaq Al-Jawahiri, which is based on sense-for-sense translation as a way to create fluent target texts that preserve the meaning of the original (Zakhir, n.d.).

As can be seen from the following comments by the late María Rosa Menocal in her paper ‘The Culture of Translation’ the effects of the cross-cultural currents fed by the translator’s art are far-reaching:

Throughout medieval Europe Arabic had a far more powerful impact on the transformation and shaping of culture than most narratives of our history reveal. This was true not only in Spain, where Arabic was the lingua franca of educated people of all three religions for many centuries, but far beyond. The new and often revolutionary cultures of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Europe were often provoked or shaped by an Arabic culture that traveled throughout Europe in many guises, in translations of a hundred varieties, in attitudes about culture, or in songs that were sung and heard and then played again in a different language. It would even be fair to say that European culture from

the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries is a culture of translation whose monuments are not only new texts in a new language but, no less, the memory of the older language and civilization (Menocal, 2005).

In her book *Ornament of the World*, Menocal takes this notion even further, maintaining that the period of the “*convivencia*” (“peaceful coexistence”) in al-Andalus, was one in which “Jews, Muslims and Christians lived and thrived together as a ‘culture of translation’, [that was] perforce a culture of tolerance” (Menocal, 2002, p. 1). Moreover, as stated by Soenke Biermann in a paper entitled ‘Found in Translation: Differences, Tolerance and Enriching Diversity’: “The collective act of translating,” Biermann asserts, “necessitates tolerance towards the ideas and the bodies of the other culture, even if there are deep disagreements on existential religious or political questions.” Biermann’s paper in fact is built around the thesis that “...developing a culture of translation leads to a more tolerant society and that

multilingualism is a vital part of such a project.” (Biermann, 2008, Abstract) Thus, we begin to view translation in a much broader socio-historical and as a phenomenon capable of exerting a wide range of influences.

In conclusion, having outlined and discussed the history and surveyed some of the salient theory in the field of translation studies, this researcher believes that the question now confronting us is: What is the cultural, economic, scientific and literary place of translation in the current age of globalization and what tools are available or can be developed to assist translators in addressing his or her work under conditions of daunting complexity? However, to answer these issues entails a further investigation on the practical tasks confronting translators in a detailed consideration and analysis of “the nuts and bolts” of the actual work of translators nowadays being conducted in a frenetic international context of both expanding opportunity and heightened danger. As such, this task will soon be the focus of future studies of translation on the part of the current researcher.

## Bibliography

A Brief history of the Hebrew language (n.d.). Retrieved October 23, 2014, from

[http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit\\_One/History/history.html](http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit_One/History/history.html).

Al-Azzawi, S. (n.d.). The Abbasids' House of Wisdom in Baghdad. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from

<http://www.muslimheritage.com/article/abbasids%E2%80%99-house-wisdom-baghdad>.

Al-Jahid , A. (1969) . *Alhayawān [The Animal]*. (p. 75). Beirut, Lebanon: Dar Al-kitab Al-Arabi [The house of the Arabic book]. Retrieved October 24, 2014, from

<http://www.translationdirectory.com/articles/article1695.php>.

Aminrazavi, M., & Van Brummelen, G. (2011, September 6). Umar Khayyam. In *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Retrieved October 23, 2014, from

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/umar-khayyam/>.

Babble, n.d. Retrieved March 29, 2017, from

<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=babble>.

- Babel, n.d. Retrieved March 29, 2017, from  
[http:// www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=Babel](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=Babel).
- Bar-Hillel, Y. (1960). The present status of the automatic translation of languages. In *Advances in computers*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from  
<http://www.mt-archive.info/Bar-Hillel-1960.pdf>.
- Bassnett-McGuire, S. (1980). *Translation studies*. London, England: Routledge Publishing
- Biblegateway, n.d. Retrieved March 27, 2014, from  
<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+11%3A1-9&version=KJV>.
- Biermann, S. (2008, June). Found in translation: differences, tolerance and enriching diversity [Abstract]. In *Southern Cross University; E-publications@SCU*. Retrieved October 24, 2014, from [http://epubs.scu.edu.au/sass\\_pubs/161/](http://epubs.scu.edu.au/sass_pubs/161/).
- Blenkinsopp, Joseph (1992). *The Pentateuch: An introduction to the first five books of the Bible*. Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York, USA: Doubleday.
- Boucher, D. (2006). Dharmarakshā and the transmission of Buddhism to China. In *Asia major*. Retrieved October 23,

2014, from

<https://web.archive.org/web/20130921144713/http://www.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/~asiamajor/pdf/2006ab/04%20AM%20vol19%20Boucher.pdf>.

Burmese-Siamese War. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*, Retrieved March 29, 2017, from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burmese-Siamese\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burmese-Siamese_War).

Calhoun, D. B. (2012). John Wycliffe: 'The morning star' of the Reformation. In *Knowing & Doing: C. S. Lewis Institute*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from [http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/John\\_Wycliffe\\_page1](http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/John_Wycliffe_page1).

Chomsky, N. (1966). *Cartesian Linguistics: A chapter in the history of rationalist thought*. New York, USA: Harper & Row.

Chomsky, N. (1972). *Language and mind*. New York, USA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Chomsky, N. (1957). *Syntactic structures*. 'S-Gravenhage, Netherlands: Mouton & Co.

De Beaugrande, R. (1996). *Introduction to text linguistics*. London, England: Longman.

Dryden, J. (1948). *Essays of John Dryden* (Vol. II). Oxford, England: Clarendon Press. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from [http://archive.org/stream/essaysofjohndryd02dryduoft/essaysofjohndryd02dryduoft\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/essaysofjohndryd02dryduoft/essaysofjohndryd02dryduoft_djvu.txt).

Equivalence: Formal and dynamic. (2000). In C. Classe (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of literary translation into English* (Vol. I, p. 415). Chicago, IL, USA: Fitzroy Dearborn, Publishers.

Fawcett, P. (1997). *Translation in language; Linguistic theories explained*. Manchester, England: St. Jerome Publishing Ltd.

Firdaus, S. (n.d.). Evolution of translation theories & practice. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from [http://www.qurtuba.edu.pk/thedialogue/The%20Dialogue/7\\_3/Dialogue\\_July\\_September2012\\_277-294.pdf](http://www.qurtuba.edu.pk/thedialogue/The%20Dialogue/7_3/Dialogue_July_September2012_277-294.pdf).

Flavius, Josephus (n.d.). *The Antiquities of the Jews*.N.P. Retrieved March 29, 2027, from [https://archive.org/details/theAntiquitiesOfTheJews\\_507](https://archive.org/details/theAntiquitiesOfTheJews_507).

Gabaude, L. (1972)(pp.330-31). « Ray A. Olsson, The Ramakien, compte rendu» Bulletin de L'École française d'Extrême Orient, Année 1972, Volume 59, Numéro 1

Getting started. *Invitation to world literature: Journey to the West*. Annenberg Learner, n.d. Web. 23 Oct. 2014.

Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.learner.org/courses/worldlit/journey-to-the-west/read/getting-started/>.

Hengel, M. (2002). *The Septuagint as Christian scripture: Its prehistory and the problem of its canon*. Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://khazarzar.skeptik.net/books/hengel01.pdf>.

Hermans, T. (n.d.). Etienne Dolet: The way to translate from one language into another (1540). Retrieved October 23, 2014, from [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/translation-studies/translation-in-history/documents/Hermans\\_pdf](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/translation-studies/translation-in-history/documents/Hermans_pdf).

Hirsh, E. G. & Barton, G. A. (1906). Shinar. In *Jewish Encyclopedia*. Retrieved March 29, 2017, from <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13582-shinar>.

Hopkins, D. (2013, April 7). John Dryden: Translator and theorist of translation. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/translation-studies/translation-in-history/documents/Hopkins\\_Dryden\\_pdf](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/translation-studies/translation-in-history/documents/Hopkins_Dryden_pdf).

- Jabik, O. (n.d.). Medieval Arabic translation: Rise and decline.  
In *TranslationDirectory.com*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from  
<http://www.translationdirectory.com/articles/article1319.php>.
- James, W. (1890), *The principles of psychology*, vol. 1. New York, USA: Henry Holt. Retrieved March 29, 2017, from  
[https://archive.org/stream/theprinciplesofp01jameuoft/theprinciplesofp01jameuoft\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/theprinciplesofp01jameuoft/theprinciplesofp01jameuoft_djvu.txt).
- Kenyon, F. G. (1939). *Our Bible and the ancient manuscripts*. London, England: Eyre & Spottiswoode.
- Kenyon, F. G. (1964). *The story of the Bible: A popular account of how it came to us* (2nd ed.). London, England: J. Murray. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from  
<http://www.bible-researcher.com/kenyon/sotb.html>.
- Khayyām, O. (1905). *The rubāiyāt of Omar Khayyām: Fitzgerald's translation*. Edinburgh/London, United Kingdom: T. N. Foulis. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from  
<https://archive.org/details/rubaiyatfitzgera00omar>.
- Koyré, A. (1957). *From the closed world to the infinite universe*. Baltimore, USA: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Kramer, P. (2011, September 29). Martin Luther and the printing press. In *Infoage*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from

<http://patrickkramer.umwblogs.org/2011/09/29/martin-luther-and-the-printing-press/>.

Kumarajiva (n.d.). In *New world encyclopedia*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Kumarajiva>.

Lee, D. H. (n.d.). Xuanzang (Hsüan-tsang) (602—664). In *Internet encyclopedia of philosophy*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/xuanzang/>.

The lotus sutra (2002, July). In *Sokka gakai international*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.sgi.org/buddhism/buddhist-concepts/the-lotus-sutra.html>.

Luther, M. (n.d.). An open letter on translating . Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.bible-researcher.com/luther01.html>.

M.C. Subhadradis Diskul (n.d.). The History of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. Retrieved March 29, 2017, from <http://www.cs.ait.ac.th/wutt/wat.html>.

Machine translation: Conquering Babel (2013, January 5). In *The Economist*. Retrieved October 24, 2014, from <http://www.economist.com/news/science-and->

technology/21569014-simultaneous-translation-computer-getting-closer-conquering-babel.

*Machine translation archive*.(2014, September 16). Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.mt-archive.info/>.

Mehrch, M. (1977). *Towards a text-based model for translation evaluation*. Ridderkerk, Netherlands: Ridderprint B.V.

Menocal, R. (2003). The Culture of translation. In *Worlds Without Borders: 2003-2013*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://wordswithoutborders.org/article/the-culture-of-translation>.

Menocal, R. (2003). *The Ornament of the world: How Muslims, Jews and Christians created a culture of tolerance in medieval Spain* (paperback ed.). Boston, MA, USA: Back Bay Books. Retrieved October 24, 2014, from <http://www.amazon.com/The-Ornament-World-Christians-Tolerance/dp/0316168718>.

Miller, J. S. (2001). *Adaptions of Western literature in Meiji Japan*. New York, USA and Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire, England: Palgrave

- Munday, J. (2012). *Introducing translation studies: Theories and applications* (3rd ed.). London, England: Routledge.
- Ohno, Toru (1999). Was Myanmar Ramayana translated from Thai Ramayana?. In *Studies in Myanmar history: Essays given to (Dr.) Than Tun on his 75th birthday* (pp. 121-142). Yangon, Myanmar: Inwa Publishing House for Than Tun Diamond Jubilee Publication Committee.
- Olsson, R. (1968). *The Ramakien: a prose translation of the Thai Ramayana*. Bangkok, Thailand: Praepittaya Co.
- Origin of English word babble (n.d.). In *Edenics: Where language began*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.edenics.net/english-word-origins.aspx?word=BABBLE>
- Phutthayotfa Chulālōk, King of Siam. Worldcatalogue (2000). *Ramayana: masterpiece of Thai literature*. Bangkok: Chalermnit. Retrieved March 29, 2017 from <https://www.worldcat.org/search?qt=wikipedia&q=isbn%3A9747390183>.
- Pornrat Damhung (2006) (pp. 243-263). Translation and making meaning in Thai Khon performance”. In *Between Tongues: Translation and/of/in performance in Asia*. Ed. Jennifer Lindsay. Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2006

Protestant Reformation (n.d.). In *Theopedia*. Retrieved

October 23, 2014, from

[http://www.theopedia.com/Protestant\\_Reformation](http://www.theopedia.com/Protestant_Reformation).

Powell, A. From Latin to French: Etienne Dolet (1509-1546)

and the rise of the vernacular in early modern France".

Senior Theses, Trinity College, Hartford, CT [USA]

2012. Trinity College Digital Repository,

<http://digitalrepository.trincoll.edu/theses/167>.

Ran, S. (2009, October). Philosophical interpretation of E.A.

Nida's definition of translation. In *Asian social science*.

Retrieved October 20, 2014, from

<file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/3972-12108-1-PB.pdf>.

Reynolds, F. (1991). (pp. 50-59). Ramayana, Rama Jataka, and

Ramakien. In *Many Ramayanas: The diversity of a*

*narrative tradition in South Asia*. (pp. 50-59). Ed. Paula

Richman. Berkeley and Los Angeles, USA,; Oxford,

England: University of California Press, 1991. Retrieved

March 29, 2017, from

<http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft3j49n8h7;brand=ucpress>.

- The Reformation and the Bible: *sola scriptura*(n.d.).In *Virtual museum of protestantism*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.museeprotestant.org/en/notice/the-reformation-and-the-bible-sola-scriptura/>.
- Sánchez, M. (2007). Domesticating the theorists: A plea for plain language.In *Translation Theory*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://translationjournal.net /journal /39plainlanguage.htm>.
- Satterfield, B. (2010, March). In "*The Alexandrian Septuagint history*". Retrieved October 23, 2014, from [http://www.setterfield.org/Septuagint\\_History.html](http://www.setterfield.org/Septuagint_History.html).
- Schaff, P. (1910). Luther's translation of the Bible.Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.bible-researcher.com /luther02.html>.
- Steiner, G. (2008). *After Babel: aspects of language and translation*. London, England& New York, USA: Oxford University Press.
- Steinmueller, J. E. (n.d.). St. Jerome and the Latin Bible.In *The history of the Latin Vulgate*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.catholicculture.org /culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=74>.

- Thaw Kaung, U (2017). “The Thai influence on the Myanmar Ramayana”. (pp. 37-43). In *The Thiri Rama: Finding Ramayana in Myanmar* (Ed. Dawn F. Rooney). Abingdon, Oxon, England; New York City, USA: Routledge Publishers
- Tytler, A. (1900). *Essay on the principles of translation*. London, England ;New York,. USA: J. M. Dent & Co. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from [https://archive.org/details/essayonprinciple00wood\\_0](https://archive.org/details/essayonprinciple00wood_0).
- Translate (n.d.). In *Webster's third new international dictionary*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/translate>.
- User, S. (2013). Translation: Etymology. In *Danlinguistic*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.danlinguistic.dk/index.php/translation-theory>.
- Vallejo, J. (n.d.). "Translation theory". Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.translationdirectory.com/article414.htm>
- Velder, C. (1961). “Notes on the Saga of Rama in Thailand.” (pp. 33-46). Retrieved March 28, 2017, from [http://www.siam-society.org/pub\\_JSS/jss\\_index\\_1961-1970.html](http://www.siam-society.org/pub_JSS/jss_index_1961-1970.html), 2017.

Vujiravudh [King Rāma VI]. (n.d.), In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved March 29, 2017, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vajiravudh>.

Whitehead, A. N. (1925). *Science and the modern world*. New York, USA: The Macmillan Company.

Wiet, G. (n.d.). Chapter 5: The golden age: The golden age of Arab and Islamic culture. In *Baghdad: Metropolis of the Abbasid Caliphate*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/med/wiet.asp>.

Wu, Cheng- Eng. *Journey to the West*. Jenner/Fair ed. Beijing: Silk Pagoda, 2005. Web. 23 Oct. 2014. Retrieved October 23, 2014 from <http://www.chine-informations.com/fichiers/jourwest.pdf>.

"*Xi'an/Chang'an*" (n.d.) Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/cities/china/xian/xian.html>.

Zakhir, M. (n.d.). History of translation.

In *Translation.directory.com*. Retrieved October 23, 2014, from <http://www.translationdirectory.com/articles/article1695.php>.

"Zayd ibn Thabit " (n.d.). In *Biographies of the Companions (Sahaabah)* .Retrieved October 24, 2014, from <http://www.missionislam.com/knowledge/books/compprophet.pdf>.