

Márta Minier and Lily Kahn

## **Introduction: (Re)Translations: Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives on Giving New Voice to Shakespeare**

The translation of Shakespeare is a research area in its own right both within Shakespeare studies (and indeed Shakespeare reception studies) and in Translation Studies. Shakespeare's singular and enduring appeal means that his work is continually the subject of new interpretations and recontextualisations within Europe and further afield. We are adamant to resist the temptation to utilise the construct of a 'timeless' and/or 'universal' Shakespeare, unless in inverted commas (since, as Kiernan Ryan observes, such a public perception is still very prevalent in many contexts despite a marked historicist presence in Early Modern Studies recently for at least three decades). Still, Shakespeare is constantly reinterpreted in the form of translation, performance and other forms of reworking, and the translating of Shakespeare has played a key role in the formation of national literatures outside Shakespeare's original language and cultural setting. Martin Esslin's reflection that many Eastern European dramatic cultures "had crystallized around translations of Shakespeare" (xii) is not restricted to this particular, culturally heterogeneous, geographical area but is rather valid throughout much of Europe.

The present thematic issue engages with this cultural phenomenon by examining the breadth of Shakespeare translation across Europe from diachronic and synchronic perspectives. It offers a range of detailed case studies from the rich history of translating and relocating the works of Shakespeare into other languages and cultural landscapes from Northern Europe (Finland), Western Europe (France), Southern Europe (parts of Spain) and Eastern and Central Europe (Hungary, Poland/Ukraine and Slovenia). The articles sample translations not only from a range of national European languages but also from a number of regional and minority languages, namely Catalan, Galician and Eastern European Hebrew.

Many of the contributions to the volume shed light on the pivotal moment when Shakespeare as a cultural agent first appeared in a particular national setting and on the central role that Shakespeare translation—"an art and a craft of considerable distinction" (Hoenselaars 17)—played in this process. Written in this vein, case studies from Catalonia (Dídac Pujol), Galicia (María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia), Jewish Eastern Europe (Lily Kahn), Slovenia (Marija

Zlatnar Moe) and Finland (Nely Keinänen) shape our understanding of the phenomenon of Shakespeare as a foundational text in the emergence of new or revived national literatures. This gives us comparative insights into connection points in intercultural communication across Europe and can complement seminal studies in this area such as Hoenselaars.

An important theme linked to the formational stage in the translation history of Shakespeare in these cultures is the role of indirect translation in the incorporation of Shakespeare into national literary canons, particularly in the case of minority languages. For example, María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia examines the translation of Shakespeare into Galician via Portuguese intermediaries, and Vanessa Palomo Berjaga briefly considers early Catalan rewrites of Shakespeare from French and Italian sources. Lily Kahn touches on the importance of German as the primary medium through which Shakespeare was first introduced to Jewish Eastern Europe. These case studies highlight the significance of the major European languages other than English in the reception of Shakespeare in minority cultures, as examined in Gideon Toury's influential work.

Some of the translations discussed in the issue demonstrate the presence of more than one language, reflecting the bilingual or multilingual environment of the intended audience. For instance, Dídac Pujol analyses the use of Spanish to represent the stilted language of *The Mousetrap* within Gaietà Soler's 1898 Catalan language translation of *Hamlet*. Mylène Lacroix elaborates on French translations of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, exploring ways in which translators make use of English and Italian in the rendition of French language elements of Dr Caius's speech. These case studies exemplify how Shakespeare translations can fruitfully showcase the interplay between language and politics: Pujol's article points to the power dynamic between dominant and minority languages, while—beyond exemplifying broader intricacies of representing foreignness used for comedic purposes in drama translation—Lacroix's article also illuminates the particular complexity of rendering the recipient culture as foreign.

Some of the contributions to this issue exemplify domesticating tendencies that often characterise the early stages of Shakespeare translation within a culture. For example, Lily Kahn's article draws attention to modes of domestication through which the first Hebrew translation of a Shakespearean comedy (*The Taming of the Shrew*, 1892) is transformed into a work of Hebrew literature rooted in an unambiguously Jewish cultural context. Mylène Lacroix offers a nuanced diachronic perspective on domesticating translation through the examination of approaches to conveying Welshness in a Francophone setting, for example with the use of Flemish ethnicity.

The longevity of Shakespearean translations is generally somewhat limited. Although some canonical translations have a relatively long life as literary works and/or in the theatre, it is common for Shakespeare to be retranslated periodically. Marija Zlatnar Moe, Dídac Pujol, and Mylène Lacroix all consider the phenomenon of recent revisitings of some of the canonical plays

in relation to previous translations, devoting attention to the linguistic and interpretive shifts that can be observed between the older translations and their more recent counterparts. Moreover, within Europe there is a widespread phenomenon of systematic series of retranslations of Shakespeare's complete works; in recent years this trend has given rise to a number of complete works projects such as the WSOY Finnish Complete Works, the new Polish Complete Works, the New Romanian Shakespeare series, and others. Nely Keinänen's article discusses the immediate reception (journalistic and otherwise) of the Finnish collected works (completed in 2013), examining the collaborative framework behind commissioned translations, the relationship between the translator and other stakeholders, public perceptions of the modern Shakespeare translator and the role of this formidable intellectual enterprise in the contemporary Finnish publishing industry and wider society.

In addition to systematic collected works, specially commissioned individual retranslations or new translations designed for specific productions are a common feature of the European theatrical scene. This kind of practice is the focus of the contributions by Márta Minier, Marija Zlatnar Moe, and María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia. Márta Minier's article on the 2003 multimedia performance of a recent, stage-oriented Hungarian translation of *Hamlet* (Nádasdy, 1999) concentrates on specific aspects of the staging as a case study of performance as intersemiotic translation, more precisely, a structural transformation (as defined by Fischer-Lichte) of Nádasdy's *Hamlet* for stage performance. Marija Zlatnar Moe provides a comparative analysis of five Slovene *Hamlet* translations, from the vantage point of the most recent one (Fišer, 2013), which was produced specifically for the National Theatre in Ljubljana. María Jesús Lorenzo-Modia surveys a number of recent Galician-language Shakespeare performances, situating them within contemporary Galician culture, and the Galician theatre industry more specifically.

As our themed issue concerns the multilingual and multicultural afterlife of Shakespeare, the articles tend to foreground the respective languages in the passages chosen for the illustration or demonstration of translation devices as well as in academic/other quotations rather than opting for the frequently used strategy of 'hiding' the foreign text and only presenting its English-language translation. It is hoped that the issue's examination of the rich variety of synchronic and diachronic themes and techniques within Shakespeare translation in the European context will provide readers with insights into translation as a practice of Shakespearean interpretation and contribute to the ongoing academic discussion of retranslation, an "enduring research lacuna" (Deane-Cox).<sup>1</sup>

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