

Javier Franco Aixelá & Christian Olalla-Soler (eds) (2022). *50 Years Later. What Have We Learnt after Holmes (1972) and Where Are We Now?* Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Servicio de Publicaciones y Difusión Científica (Tibón: Estudios traductológicos; 4), pp. 190. ISBN: ISBN 978-84-9042-461-2, available at: <https://accedacris.ulpgc.es/bitstream/10553/124520/1/9788490424612.pdf>.

James S. Holmes used his 1972 conference paper “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies” to call for the creation of a specific area of research and training to supersede the denomination “translation theory” which up to then was mostly employed in comparative literature and linguistics. In 1988, that same call for action(s) was re-issued even more strongly and widely when his friend and colleague, Raymond van den Broeck, included it in the posthumous collective volume *Translated!: Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies*. In the fiftieth year since its first appearance, co-editors Javier Franco Aixelá (University of Alicante, Spain) and Christian Olalla-Soler (University of Bologna, Italy) present a volume of seven surveys that attempt to trace the many reverberations of that call. The book is intended to serve as both a tribute and a stock-taking of how Holmes’ work has been “kept alive” (9). In a short yet profound, clearly organised and developed open-access publication, the editors and invited authors not only tell but also show how our area of study, most widely known by the name Holmes gave it —Translation Studies (TS)—, has seen a “dramatic evolution” (8).

The kick-off chapter by Olalla-Soler, Franco Aixelá and Rovira-Esteva on the “bibliometric indicators for TS before and after Holmes’ publication” (15) is an excellent empirical and comparative overview of the “publishing diaspora” (13) since 1972. Focussing on five parameters (thematic evolution, publishing languages, journals, authorship and productivity, and impact) and sourcing data from BITRA —founded by Franco Aixelá and now with over 94,000 references—and RETI—a database co-developed by Rovira-Esteva which tracks quality indicators for over 350 active journals—, this panoramic view is teeming with information conveyed in text and well-designed visuals. Their methodology is excellent, particularly in the way that they normalise data for productivity and impact. The authors paint a picture of mostly generalist journals, with little mention in their titles of specialised translation modalities or interpreting. Importantly, their study shows that the presence of TS journals in international rankings has increased decade by decade, although the use of English as a lingua franca and as the medium of research dissemination reaches over 60% in the 2012-2021 decade. Readers also learn that the advent of digital periodicals (hybrid or digital-only) and open access after 1996 broke the model of subscribed, paper-based journals and began the drastic transformation of the academic and scientific publishing industry. Today it continues in a state of flux over increasing open access publishing, with many publishers demanding article processing charges (APCs), a tendency the co-authors say may increase over time (25). There has been a steady increase in productivity per author, as compared to the previous two decades. From this study, we learn that the authors with the highest all-time number of citations (i.e. “author impact,” 32), all of whom published individually-authored books in the 1992-2001 period, were Venuti, Baker, and Toury. The all-time most impactful publication is Toury’s *Descriptive Translation Studies –and beyond* (1995), and the second most cited is Venuti’s *The*



Translator's Invisibility, published the same year. However, the impacts per author are lower in the 2002-2011 period (Pym, Díaz-Cintas and Baker) and even lower still in the 2012-2021 period (Pym, O'Brien, and Romero-Fresco), purportedly because an increased number of publications per author leads to decreased citations per author and per publication. The chapter co-authors compile the names of highly productive new(er) authors such as Agnieszka Szarkowska and Pilar Orero (32) and mention that co-authorship is on the rise. The excellent biometric data presented by the three co-authors challenges us to engage in further reflection on the reasons behind these empirical findings. Here is food for thought: the most productive scholars in 1972-2001 were all men, while in the subsequent period (2002-2011) most were women, and in the last period (2012-2021) they were all women (31).

José Lambert's "partly (auto)biographical discussion" (48) starts with an excellent survey of the "movements around Holmes" (53) between 1972 and the 1980 KU Leuven (Antwerp) symposium which were followed by a period he calls "the silent years". During this immediate aftermath, the Belgium—Low Countries—Israel group-without-yet-being-a-group created momentum for studying actual translated (literary) texts in their socially-situated junctures of interplay with target languages and cultures. Before Holmes, research about translation had been encapsulated within the rather rigid comparative literary and linguistics academia frameworks of the day. One sentence shows how far we have come over these fifty years: "Internationalization did not yet belong to the key words in the human sciences: a handicap for people focusing on translation matters" (50). Lambert reminds us that Holmes' proposal was essentially to provide an alternative framework for training and research and that it had "a spectacular worldwide impact on curricula" (56), though Holmes in 1972 almost prophetically trusted that others would plan the next steps without him (50). Before analysing useful new avenues such as research into indirect translation, children's literature translation and translation in the Chinese-speaking context and in other Asian cultures (though with a "black spot" in Latin America), Lambert devotes some pages to critiquing Theo Hermans for not recognising sufficiently the Toury/Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) succession from Holmes (59) and to denouncing the discipline's adoption of English as a lingua franca as the vehicle of communication. Lambert wonders "Is it a joke that [TS] avoids translation wherever possible?" (60) and his ear-twisting provocations make this chapter a delight.

Muñoz Martín and Marín García tell the tale of how their disciplinary realm, now called Cognitive Translation and Interpreting Studies (CTIS), intersected with Holmes after its beginnings in information processing, behaviourist psychology and generative linguistics, and of how it subsequently deflected through translation process research (TPR) to present-day CTIS. They posit that, while Holmes' process-oriented translation studies seemed mostly geared towards "the study of short-spanned cognitive processes underlying (mainly, translation) tasks, more or less in laboratory conditions" (76.), TPR-then-CTIS researchers were aiming for models that were more interdisciplinary and evidence-based—for instance, some models that took a more cognitively scientific approach to the study of "linear processing of discrete units of information" interspersed with "problem-solving cycles" (77) that particularly challenge a translator's developing competences and lead to the acquisition of expertise. TPR developed keyboard logging and eye-tracking as empirical, scientific tools for measuring such things as effort, difficulty and attention while translating (79) and CTIS emerged in an attempt to explain sufficiently the empirical data they had gathered.

Though the intersection with Holmes was fleeting, the authors state that CTIS “still remain[s] within the scope of [DTS]” (70). This chapter indeed offers “other ways to interpret the decade” of the 1980s (75).

In her chapter on translation technologies since 1972, Sharon O’Brien engages very thoroughly with Holmes’ map, arguing that CAT tools, machine translation (MT) and post-editing (PE), and artificial intelligence (AI) have transformed it deeply. She posits that, with a hierarchical shape that looks more like the roots of a tree, Holmes’ “original structure was problematic” (101) and not fully capable of describing transversal relations between the strands. Rather than place translation technologies under a single branch of TS, she argues that “we need to embrace and claim technology as a *core component* of translation in the age of AI” and that technology should be “layered into” all branches and merged into an “integrated view of translation as both a human and a machine endeavour” (101). In previous parts of the chapter, she uses terms like “connectedness” and “overarching”, so we know exactly what she is talking about. O’Brien critiques Sonia Vandepitte’s 2008 article, “Remapping Translation Studies: Towards a Translation Studies Ontology,” for merely assigning translation technologies to a single or limited number of strands in Holmes’ map. O’Brien reveals the present-day assumptions underlying the very terms “translation technology” and “human translation” in a way that I found was solidly didactic. In order to drive her point home even more assertively, I think her article would have benefited from several images such as those used in the biometrics chapter.

For Gary Massey, writing on the didactics of translation, training is also a part of all of Holmes’ applied branches, including translation aids and translation criticism—the latter of which was not mentioned by Holmes in relation to assessment and quality assurance. Massey’s chapter has a clear progression from plotting the prescriptive, transmissionist and intuitive landscape of the 1970s to the evidence-based, empirically-researched competence models developed mostly by Nord and Kiraly that have led to the PACTE group’s many achievements. He describes the currently prevailing “major trend” used in training institutions as “an amalgamation of competence-oriented tasking and collaborative experiential learning” (107). What is amazing to contemplate is that the NACT project’s competence framework and the EFFORT project’s descriptions of specialised areas of competence (economic, legal, literary, scientific and technical) have brought us to the point where a viable translation-specific CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) is just a step away. The “major deficits” Massey finds are a shortfall in training of trainers (107 and 122-124) and a lack of collaboration with language education (which he consistently calls “additional language learning”, or ALL, 107 and 124-125). For me, his discussion of the “ever strengthening bonds between translator education and professional practice” (116) in the section on “Current Concerns and Future Prospects” is a high point in the chapter.

The co-editors and chapter authors all mention interpreting, with several assertively using the name Translation and Interpreting Studies (TIS) for our discipline. Ineke Crezee’s tracing of Holmes’ call for action and his mapping of our field is broad and thorough. She provides an author-created map of Interpreting Studies (IS) that mirrors Holmes’ original one (136) and an expanded map of medium-restricted Interpreting Studies that includes human oral consecutive and simultaneous interpreting (137). In her excellent overview, she underscores the difficulty of research in IS when it comes to

gaining access to recordings or transcripts of “interpreted renditions,” particularly in public service interpreting conducted in private spaces (139). She also describes the barriers to generalisability of research findings due to the wide number of scenarios where interpreting takes place (139). This is one of the chapters which best plots the superimposition of Holmes’ map onto a contemporary field within TIS over years of development and evolution. Quite expectedly, Crezee finds subfields missing from Holmes—signed language interpreting and non-professional interpreting—and calls for greater attention to both. In her opinion, research into signed language interpreting products, which may be relatively easy to access from publicly televised broadcasts, can offer the promise of generalisable findings, and the study of non-professional versus professional interpreters, particularly in police and court scenarios, can reveal differences and similarities, if any, between untrained and trained language mediators. She notes that “the use of ever more sophisticated interpreting aids such as [computer-aided interpreting] CAI and digital pens, e-tools and resources” (146) is increasing, though the single paragraph she devotes to this topic is, in my view, too brief.

Leona Van Vaerenbergh’s chapter exploring whether functionalism can be considered a general theory of translation or a basis for partial theories of translation is the one which most deeply explores the pure > theoretical > general and partial branch of Holmes’ map. She deeply examines the key 1980s and 1990s theories put forward by Reiß and Vermeer (skopos theory), Holz-Mänttari (translational action) and Nord (functional/functionalist theory) and reaches the conclusion that “the functionalist theory today still forms the basis for the development of new partial theories” (183). She helpfully provides English translations of all German-coined terms and of extensive quotes from German. Van Vaerenbergh’s sensitivity to interpreting studies allows her to make several points about the differences between the functionalism of the indirect, written modalities and the direct, oral ones that are enlightening. She mentions that, on the one hand, “the interpreter has the opportunity to observe the communication, the interaction between the participants” (170) and that, on the other, “the audience while listening to the interpreted text can see nonverbal communication aspects such as gestures, facial expression, and slides, and can partly hear the acoustic features of the original speech” (177).

Before winding down this review with positive remarks and a recommendation, it is only appropriate that I offer a few constructive comments. The first has to do with the title, to which I would have recommended adding the word “map”, because that is what I believe Holmes is most remembered for, as well as adding the name of the discipline, which I posit should have included “interpreting”. In that sense, I think *Fifty Years after Holmes’s Map of Translation and Interpreting Studies: What have we learnt and where are we now?* would have been more fitting. Despite a huge effort to include co-authors from all over the planet in terms of regions and languages there is a bias towards western European cultures, with blind spots in Asia, Africa and the Americas. This is important when we look at Figure 2 (10), a rich visualisation of all authors in BITRA who have cited Holmes, and see names like Liu and Wang, Abdel Latif and Heydarian, and Arrojo and Larkosh. I also feel that there could have been closer editing, uniformising the “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies”, which appears a number of times without capitalisation, and correcting minor errors with the placement of parentheses and quotation marks. Finally, I feel that an end-of-the-book wrap-up would have been appropriate, with some statements on whether the co-editors’

objectives were achieved and some acknowledgements for people and institutions that made the publication possible.

I recommend this collection of essays that trace the many vertebrations of James S. Holmes' 1972 call for action up to the year this volume was published for the many reasons and despite the few faults stated above. José Lambert calls this an account of "how contemporary TS remembers its own origins" (41). We may look back over those five decades and somehow feel disappointed that the amazing developments in our "hectic history" (12) have left Holmes far behind, especially if we feel that the disputes and sidetracks typical of academic progress have lessened the distance we could have gone. Several of the chapters use interesting metaphors in the titles (for example, "black box" and "dark horse"), but they have rather negative associations. However, the place where we are today in Translation and Interpreting Studies deserves the highest commendation precisely for how far we have come, and we could not have done that without a figure and a voice like Holmes'. I would like my last sentence to be a commendation also of Raymond van den Broeck, the friend and colleague responsible for the posthumous publication and relaunching of "The Name and Nature" in 1988 (in *Translated!: Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies*). The final words in his introduction to the volume describe Holmes as "a man who not only did pioneering work in his field but whose views on translation will continue to stimulate future generations" (5).

References

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