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Translating and translators before the professional project

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ABSTRACT

Translators of the past may have been a very different breed from the professional translators of today. In order to examine the notion of 'translator' in a historical perspective, this article looks at attribution of translatorship in the late 19th century Finland. Instances of the word 'translator' were identified and the uses of the word examined with the help of several different data sets. The material included text corpora, yearbooks, bibliographies, reviews and translation contracts, and the different contexts and circumstances in which translators were mentioned were studied. 'Translator' emerges as a designation in two different contexts: as a position in state administration, and as a role with regard to translated literature (fiction and non-fiction). Outside these contexts and roles, authors of translations were usually not called translators.

KEYWORDS

Attribution, naming conventions, agency, translatorship, role.

1. Introduction

The many meanings given to the word *profession* (and the related terms professionalism, professionalisation and professional) make it a challenge to summarise the recent discussions in Translation Studies on the subject. It is even more problematic to see the links between studies concentrating on the (professional) translators of today and historical research into the figure of the translator. Are the two related in any way? Are there parallels in today's and yesterday's translator figure? Definitions of *translation* have been debated for decades in Translation Studies; yet it would seem that it is even more difficult to define what or who a *translator* is. We hardly ever make any difference or put effort in defining in what way a translator was a translator in the past, or compare it to what it is to be a translator today. The question may seem trivial and the answer obvious – translator is someone who translates — but even a superficial study soon reveals the problematic nature of the translating/translator equation.

In this article, I will try to get to *translatorship* in the late 19th century Finland through examining what different written documents of the era tell us about translators and about being a translator, by focusing on the issue of naming. 'Naming' here is shorthand for the different ways in which people who translated were referred to: whether and in what circumstances someone was called 'translator'. This is the main research question in this study. No-naming is also of interest (anonymity of translators; invisibility of the translated status of the text). The background of the study is in my earlier findings, based on different sets

of data, on the heterogeneity of translating practices (Paloposki 2007a). The theoretical background of the research is informed by the history of professions, microhistory and the history of science, all of which emphasise the on-going, flexible and in-the-making nature of social forms and interaction. Translating is looked at as a social practice among other emerging literary and professional practices.

I will first very briefly outline the sociological study of professions (Section 2). I will then touch on the recent interest of Translation Studies in professions, starting from the overall focus on the study of translators, a topic with a clear sociological element (Section 3). From there I will move on to the main part of my study, attribution of translatorship (Section 4). Preliminary conclusions on how *translating* is related to being a *translator* are given in Section 5. I will try not only to understand the position of those persons who in that era translated (fiction or non-fiction, paid or unpaid), but also our endeavours as researchers and translator trainers in conceptualising or categorising these people.

2. Professions: etymology, history, sociology

In our everyday understanding, profession is either “any occupation by which a person regularly earns a living” or more specifically, an occupation where training and formal qualifications are needed (the *Oxford English Dictionary* gives both senses).

Professions were born largely during the 19th century but not in the sense we understand the word ‘profession’ today. Eliot Freidson (1983: 26) argues for the relativity of the term: it is geographically and historically related to certain areas and periods and its interpretations vary. In England and the US, “the newly reorganized or newly formed middle-class occupations” sought “the title of ‘profession’ because it was connected with the gentlemanly status of the traditional learned professions”, whereas in continental Europe it was largely the active role of the state in organising training and employment that was to play a significant part in the forming of professions (Freidson 1983: 24–26).

Sociology of professions, the field of study most profoundly engaged in theorising ‘profession,’ is not a uniform paradigm but has consisted of several different approaches, some overlapping, some in dire contradiction with each other. The functionalist (or ‘trait’) theory, popular until the 1960’s, classified occupations into ‘professions’ and ‘semi-professions’ (as in Etzioni 1969); “and”, MacDonald (1995: 3) adds, “(presumably) ‘non-professions’”. From 1960’s onwards attention was increasingly paid not on defining professions as safeguards of welfare society but on studying them also as monopolies, holders of power and keepers of (perhaps undeserved) rights. There are historical studies examining the rise of professions in changing contexts (the most often studied professions are those of doctors and lawyers, but there are studies on engineers and

architects as well as pre-modern conceptions of profession in the case of fine arts, too; see Sciulli 2007). Finally, there is the question “What is going on here?”. Keith M. MacDonald cites Everett C. Hughes:

in my own studies I passed from the false question ‘Is this occupation a profession’ to the more fundamental one ‘what are the circumstances in which people in an occupation attempt to turn it into a profession and themselves into professional people?’ (Hughes 1963, cited in MacDonald 1995: 6).

For Robert Dingwall (1983: 5), the sociologists’ interest lays in the new social forms emerging from this professionalising project. In Finland, these social forms have been studied by, for example, Konttinen (1991) and Julkunen (1994).

From outside sociology, there is also a wide variety of studies focusing on professions, emerging often from academic institutions that train professionals in different fields. The development and status of a profession are studied either from a comparative or historical viewpoint, usually from an insider, engaged angle: journalists (Pietilä 2012), social workers (Weiss-Gal and Welbourne 2008), librarians (Alakulppi 1993) or even firefighters (Tolppi 2001). These studies often apply the ‘traits’ approach: identifying common factors (traits or characteristics) of established professions and comparing nationally or cross-nationally these traits with the degree of establishment of an aspiring profession.

3. Translators in Translation Studies: people, individuals, professionals

The interest in the translator surfaced first through the professional-cum-academic institutions such as the International Federation of Translators (FIT; established in 1953), resulting in publications such as Delisle and Woodsworth (eds) (1995) and Delisle (2002). In Translation Studies the translator emerged as a ‘figure’ in the 1990’s: a flesh-and-blood person, an agent of cultural change, or a professional. One of the earliest advocates of the study of translators has been Anthony Pym, and soon after, the sociological turn in Translation Studies introduced issues such as the habitus of the translator or the translator’s agency. Much of this work has been historical in nature but is now being complemented by an interest in the position and status of translators today and the translating profession.

Profession was a word used in connection with translators even before the onset of this ‘professional turn’. Pym used it in his book *Method in Translation History* (1998) in a plea to increase research on translators and their interculture; this plea and his own focus on translators have been consistent in his writings since (2000, 2004[1992], 2009 for example). The word *profession* seems to be used rather as shorthand for work/task/occupation: the focus is on individual translators and their

community ("interculture") and on their social role in mediating. For Pym, professionals are people who do the same thing, which in this case is translating, usually for money (in 2000: 4–5 Pym talks about remuneration as an element of "minimal" professionalism; remuneration is more implicit in Pym 2009: 36). Translating may be their main occupation or only one of several possible occupations ("multiprofessionalism", or later also "multidiscursivity", 2009: 33). Pym's emphasis is on translators not only as mediators but as agents of change (2004: 6–7).

Sociology of translation and the 'social turn' (see Wolf (ed.) 2006) took up translators large-scale: their habitus (Simeoni 1998), their networks (professional ones, among others) (Koskinen 2008, Abdallah 2012); their agency (Kinnunen and Koskinen (eds) 2010). Research in this area has much in common with the sociological study of professions, which focuses on the formal and informal organisation of practice. Both deal with questions such as the occupational community's socialisation and self-regulation, the impact of specialisation on the division of labour, and the role of paraprofessional workers and self-help (see Dingwall 1983: 8). The emergence of the translator figure has been such that Andrew Chesterman (2009: 13–14) speaks about "translator studies". Defining who is a translator, however, is no easy task. Is it someone who does translations sometimes? All the time? Again, how do we define 'doing translations': in many instances translating may be hidden among other literary pursuits and a hybrid task (like compiling texts); overlapping with journalism, adapting and writing. Actually, 'doing translations' does seem to be a step away from 'translating': defining a translator through translations as full-length texts, calculable in numbers, and not the more abstract 'act' of translating.

The recent discussion on profession in translation is largely focused on questions such as status, remuneration, position in society etc., some of which can be measured (salary, education); others are more intangible like prestige, visibility and perceived influence. There are studies on charting the professionalisation degree of translators or interpreters and/or the way the profession is conceptualised among its members (Dam and Zethsen 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011; Katan 2009, 2011; Sela-Sheffy and Shlesinger (eds) 2011; Froeliger and Laplace (eds) 2012) or how the members of the profession portray or represent themselves for the public (Dam 2013). In interpreting studies, one of the earliest studies to chart the emergence of the profession is Tseng (1992).

To complement the picture Translation Studies is drawing of translators and the profession as it is now, studies are needed to look into the antecedents of what it was like to work doing translations and what kinds of expectations or attributions were attached to translating and the people who translated. To look at the roles and identities these people assumed or that were attributed to them is but one step in the process of understanding collective images of translators, by themselves and by

others. This starting point is in line with microhistory (Adamo 2006) and history of science (e.g. Shapin and Schaffer 1985), which emphasise history as in-the-making, from below, as it was experienced by the people involved.

4. Translators in history: the case of Finland in the late 19th century

4.1. Translating in Finland from 16th to 19th century

To understand the nature of translatorship in the 19th century, some background about translating in Finland is needed. The Reformation was a turning point in the writing down of the vernacular, and for Bible and religious texts, translation and many forms of rewriting were part and parcel of the different processes involved, including the political turmoil around Reformation and the gradual codification of the written language. This period in history has not been researched in terms of attributing translatorship, but it seems plausible to presume that *translator* emerged in two senses. The first is the translator of a specific text (the Bible, a codex): what was translated defined the attribution. The translator was defined in relation to what he translated. The second translator function also started from the need to translate specific texts but was more institutional. Finland being part of Sweden until 1809, there was a position founded in 1734 for an official translator of the Finnish language in the state administration in Stockholm. The first translator started in 1735, and the post was made permanent in 1778 (Koivusalo 2007: 38).

The start of the Russian era in the early 19th century marked a diversification in translating: in addition to religious and administrative texts, new genres emerged and literature, non-fiction and school books were translated. Furthermore, there were official state-employed translators in the Senate and later in institutions such as the Finnish railways and the post office. There is very little research as yet on translating in administration (see, however, Saarikivi 2005 for Antti Jalava translating in the Senate; Koskinen 2014 for translating in the city of Tampere in Finland and Riikonen 2005 for translator status in state administration).

Institutionally, translation is a very late professional project: whereas literary and cultural occupations such as writers and publishers had formed their associations early on in history (in Finland, the publishers set up their own association in 1859, journalists in 1890 — it became functional in 1921 – and writers in 1897), translators' associations are usually of a later advent (again in Finland, the association was set up in 1955). For lack of more institutional forms of socialisation of translatorship (such as training and translators' associations) during the late 19th and early 20th century, we need to look into a wider set of data in order to examine how translators were conceived of: any and all discussions where

translators may have been mentioned are important as indices of understanding translatorship.

4.2. Methodology and data

Gideon Toury proposed to look at translations through what “is presented or regarded as such within the target culture, on whatever grounds” (1985: 20). Lieven D’hulst (2012) extends this thinking to text transfer. I would like to apply the same reasoning to studying translators. Is, then, a person a translator not when he or she has/possesses certain characteristics or traits but when he or she is *assumed* to be one? Today, when issues of identity and belonging are closely linked with professions, translators may more self-evidently regard themselves as members of a profession and portray or present their translatorship in various ways (see Dam 2013); for periods when there was no such identity readily on offer, other kinds of data are necessary for studying in what ways translatorship was assumed. The important methodological question here is: How do you go about studying *assuming*?

In this study, I have tried to solve this problem by looking at attribution (naming). This I have done in two ways, starting from two different angles. First, I have searched for the word ‘translator’ to identify in which general contexts translators were mentioned. I have done this with two sets of textual data: an electronic corpus of Finnish 19th century texts (which give an overview of 19th century written information), and the official yearbooks and calendars published in the 19th century (which give information on jobs, work, state administration, population statistics, etc.). Second, I have looked at bibliographies, paratexts, reviews of translated literature, and translator correspondence to see whether and how translators were referred to in connection with translated literature. The first set of data gives information on the category of translators in the 19th century Finland; the second data set starts from translations, with the aim of finding out how the producers of these texts were referred to — or if they were referred to at all.

The material is large and sprawling; there have been many different agents involved in producing these sources, from translators to publishers to bureaucrats to readers to critics. Each group would merit a treatment of its own; each different data set could be studied on its own. The heterogeneity of the data, however, is here regarded as an asset rather than a drawback as it contributes to forming a more complete picture of assumed translatorship in the late 19th century Finland.

The study is informed by my earlier research in the period (Paloposki 2007a). My interest in translatorship in the 19th century Finland, in fact, changed direction because of a striking observation based on translation statistics. Bibliographical and statistical data point towards a large proportion of published translations being one-offs by one single

translator. We do not know much about these people and their lives, and they have generally not been in the centre of translation research, because of their small translation output. Yet, if they together are responsible for huge numbers of published translations, this fact surely merits at least some attention in the history of translation and translators, and we need to look at the contexts in which people actually were called translators.

Another observation in connection with the compiling and editing of a two-volume Finnish history of translation (Riikonen *et al.*, eds, 2007) was that instead of the original intention of bringing into light less-known translators, we only managed to profile and highlight translators who were already well-known — and they were well-known because of the multitasking nature of their work (cf. Pym 1998). The ones who were in the shadows *still* lead a shadowy existence; we *still* know almost nothing about them. Studies are needed which combine the seemingly rather separate aspects of translations (as important vehicles for literary and linguistic development) and translators (largely as shadowy, unknown figures). In other words, contexts of translator attribution may help us understand the phenomenon as a whole.

4.3 Translators as portrayed in calendars and yearbooks

The data for this part of the study consist of statistical yearbooks and calendars which list, among other things, various occupations and professions in different contexts.

The first statistical yearbook studied, *Annuaire statistique pour la Finlande*, has been published annually from the year 1879 in two languages, Finnish and French (the yearbooks can be read at <https://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/67152>). For this study, the yearbooks of 1879, 1889 and 1899 were searched manually for any mention of translators.

The second yearbook used in the study was *Suomenmaan Valtio-Kalenteri* ('Finland's state calendar'). This yearbook dates back to 1811, was published annually first in Swedish (*Finlands statskalender*) and from the year 1869 in Finnish as well. The yearbooks for the years 1869, 1879, 1889 and 1899 were examined in search of mentions of translators.

There is no statistical survey of the occupations of the entire Finnish population in the 19th century statistical yearbooks, but different occupations come up under such headings as commerce, education, or travel, and the numbers of people working in specific areas such as health care are carefully documented. Under other headings one can find such occupational groups as industrial workers, shopkeepers, teachers, lighthouse keepers, bank clerks, doctors and officials in state administration, but there is no mention of literary or administrative jobs

or tasks such as journalists, translators, authors, *et cetera*. The numbers of newspapers are listed, but not the numbers of people working for them (for the history of Finnish statistics, see Luther 1993).

Where translators are referred to (and indeed by their proper names) is in the state calendars. Here, in addition to all other information (about foreign countries, about calendar matters, astronomy and the like), state and municipal administrative posts are listed office by office. The name of the post is followed by the name of the occupant of the post at the time of the editing of the calendar. Degrees, titles, decorations and knighthoods of the individual occupants are also listed, as well as the year of their birth and of taking up office. It is thus possible to actually count all the translators working for state administration in any particular year.

In 1869, there were altogether 37 translators mentioned in the calendar, in 1879 their number was 38; in 1889 it had risen to 48 and in 1899 there were 53 translators mentioned. In a few occasions, there was only one person in charge of two different translator's positions. For example in 1879, Wilhelm Rancken was acting junior translator at the Senate and Russian translator at the Uusimaa province.

Many of the posts (but not all) were related to a specific language, most often Russian or Finnish (usually only one language is mentioned); German in a couple of cases, and in one instance, English. Swedish is not mentioned at all, but it is reasonable to assume that Swedish, the traditional language of education and administration, was the starting point, the pivot language for most of the translations, and because of its self-evident status, it was unmarked in documents.

A large part of the translators worked for the judiciary; in 1889 legal institutions employed 19 translators (out of 48), and in 1899 their number was 22 (out of 53). The multilingual town of Viipuri in the border zone between Russia and Finland consistently employed several translators in different institutions (13 posts and 12 different translators in 1889); in most other towns the number of translators varied between one (e.g. Savonlinna) and eight (Turku and Vaasa in 1889). The Savonlinna translator in 1889 is the only female translator mentioned in these data. Her name was Maria Ramstedt and she was translator and interpreter for Russian and German.

Many translators occupied their positions for long periods (like the earlier mentioned Wilhelm Rancken, who rose from the position of junior to senior translator of Russian in the Senate; Riikonen 2005: 57), but the translator posts in the judiciary seem to have been more of a thoroughfare to other (judicial) occupations. None of the 9 translators in the Viipuri court in 1889 remained there ten years later; all had moved (up?) and were working as judges or assessors in other courts.

Another feature in the listings of the translators is the number and nature of other titles and designations following the translators' names. The 'background' occupations of the translators are surprisingly varied: they include teacher, rector, lieutenant, assessor, captain, dragoon, secretary, legal advisor, clerk. University degrees are also often mentioned. There are a few translators without any titles or qualifications; among these, the only female translator, Maria Ramstedt.

The position of translator in state administration was clearly born and grew out of an awareness of the needs imposed on administration by official and unofficial multilingualism (Swedish, Russian, Finnish and sometimes German and English). The translators' backgrounds were very varied and so were their careers. Recruitment of translators, requirements for the job, linguistic abilities, contents of the work, potential instructions and translators' aids have not been studied in detail or hardly at all (see, however, Saarikivi 2005 for the work in the Senate of one translator, Antti Jalava), and no measured opinion can be given of the uniformity of the tasks and working practices or the self-understanding of the people employed. Yet, the activity of and need for translating was institutionally acknowledged in establishing and keeping up the category of 'translator' in state administration.

4.4 *Translate* and *translator* in 19th century Finnish texts: corpus evidence

The Reformer and Bible translator Mikael Agricola used the verb *kääntää* ('to turn'; cf. old Swedish *wenda*), still in use in Finnish meaning 'to translate'. A word of later advent is *suomentaa* ('to Finnicise'): it appeared for the first time in print in the newspaper *Turun Wiikko-Sanomia* on 9.12.1820. It is analogical to the old Swedish *förswenska* ('to Swedish'), the English *to English* or the German *verdeutschen* (see Tymoczko 2003 on the word *translate*). *Suomentaa* is still in use today and in many cases in free variation with the verb *kääntää* (with no connotation of domestication in the Venutian sense). *Suomentaa* was most likely coined to emphasise the significance of the target language.

A database search of the 19th century Finnish language corpus of the then Research Institute of the Languages of Finland (RILF) was carried out in 2004 in connection with an earlier study on the emergence and co-existence of the words *suomentaa* and *kääntää* (Paloposki 2007b); the findings have been integrated into the present study. The electronic corpus includes publications (both translated and original) such as dictionaries, school books, fiction, non-fiction, instructional writings, religious works, newspapers and published correspondence. There are thus such disparate text types as personal letters, reviews (in newspapers and journals), paratexts (in translated books) and fiction, which are usually studied in separation, but are here examined in conjunction. – The Institute was renamed and its tasks redefined in 2011, but the

corpora (texts from 1809 to 1899) are still available at http://kaino.kotus.fi/korpus/1800/meta/1800_coll_rdf.xml.

The corpus was searched for all instances of the words *kääntää* and *suomentaa* and their derivatives (search words *kään**, *suom**). The search resulted in 641 hits for *suom** and 108 hits for *kään** (words with the same stem but with different meaning – such as the concrete ‘to turn’ – were manually removed from the list). 78 of the hits for *suom** were for *translator*, the person who is translating; 14 of these were used in self-reference (by the translators themselves). Translators were referred to by the word *kääntäjä* in 31 instances, one of which was a self-reference. 10 instances of *kääntäjä* appeared in administrative and legal documents and denoted official translating posts in state administration.

The words denoting translators, *kääntäjä* and *suomentaja*, can be roughly divided into several groups according to their contexts and the textual slots they occupy. Self-referrals are either from translators’ own paratexts (‘translator’s note’; prefaces signed by the translator) or mentions in correspondence. In cases where the text refers to other translators, the functions consist of paratextual or bibliographical information (the translator of the book which is advertised/reviewed/referred to) and commentary (reviews and evaluations of translations where the critique is offered directly to the translator). In addition, some of the occurrences pertain to lists of administrative posts (as above) and dictionary entries.

The rough generalisation that can be made out of these data is that dictionary entries and lists of legal/administrative jobs refer to translators as persons filling in a post or doing a job, whereas all other sources refer to *translators in relation to a certain book*; i.e, it is the translation that defines the translator – even if this is a reverse chronological order of events. The fact that translating as (regular) work does not get much visibility may be indicative of the understanding of the nature of the job: usually not a full occupation, but piecemeal work, done on a book-to-book basis.

4.5 Translators in bibliographies

Paratextual information in bibliographies, unsurprisingly, is in line with the above; the primary objective of bibliographies is to collect information related to books, and translators are a bibliographically meaningful category only in relation to books they have translated. Bibliographical information examined here had been to a large extent collected directly from books, which in most cases results in the information in the bibliographies being identical to information in books. In the first Finnish bibliography, Pipping (1856–1857), the earliest instances of the word *suomentaa* appear in connection with the books where the word was first used (Pipping 1856–1857: 486–487): entry 2403 reads “*Wanhan*

Richardin Aawe- ja Neuwo-Kirja”, from the year 1828, “*suomenettu* [sic]” (Modern spelling would be ‘*suomennettu*’).

The second bibliography from the 19th century, Vasenius (1878), in addition to reproducing bibliographical information, also collects previously undocumented information from a variety of sources, e. g. by comparing books. Translating in Vasenius’ bibliography is variedly referred to by using different derivatives of the verb *suomentaa* (‘to Finnicise’) or *kääntää* (‘to translate’): *suomennos* (‘Finnicisation’) or *käännös* (‘translation’), *suomentama* (‘translated’) or by attributing the act of translating to the translator (*suomensi A. J. Weänänen* — ‘translated by A. J. Weänänen’).

Bibliographical information is far from uniform in the books themselves; not just the translator’s but also the author’s name is not always given. Similarly, information about the book’s status (translation, compilation, adaptation, original) is often missing. These irregularities are typical especially in the early 19th century. Publishers seem not always to have considered translatedness significant enough to be signalled. Rather than lament this, we can ask what it tells about the ideas and understanding of the practices involved. It cannot be deduced that *translating* was considered insignificant: other literary practices — authoring, journalism — were also often non-signalled. Authorship and the genealogy of texts were understood differently for various reasons. Authors/translators/compilers may have experienced their work as part of a joint literary or educational enterprise, for example.

Later the signalling increases and becomes more varied, and bibliographical information gains more importance: Vasenius took considerable trouble trying to discover the origins of books which carried scant bibliographical information, by visiting the Royal Library in Sweden in search for originals (Vasenius 1878: viii).

4.6 Translators’ letters and contracts

Letters, contracts, receipts, memos and drafts are among the documents that can be found in archives and that may throw light on translating and on what it meant to be a translator (see Munday 2014). The way people signed their letters and contracts is telling of their perceived role in social and literary exchanges. We thus now turn our gaze to translators themselves.

Probably the biggest collection of translators’ correspondence and contracts from the 19th century Finland is located in the archives of the publishing house Edlund. Edlund published around 3800 books, out of which 800 in Finnish, most of them translations, and the archives contain hundreds of letters, notes, contracts and receipts from translators and authors. This part of the study relies on results of an earlier research, for

the purposes of which around 200 letters and more than 50 contracts and receipts were looked at in detail.

It might be plausible to expect to find the word 'translator' in translation contracts and correspondence. What becomes evident, however, is the relative invisibility of translatorship in signatures. In the majority of cases there is no other information apart from the name. This in itself may be natural: both parties know that it is translating they are talking about (and incidentally, the authors' letters in the same collection show similar results: the status of author is not signalled either). The interesting cases are the ones where some other attribution is given. These include NN, 'university student'; NN, 'MA in jurisdiction', NN, 'teacher', for example. As is apparent also from the large number of one-off translators mentioned earlier, many people did something else, and it is this 'something else' they often refer to when signing documents, even if the documents pertain to translating. Thus, like state translators, fiction and non-fiction translators also had one or more other occupations or titles.

It may also be telling that if credentials are sought, it is the other occupations and titles that provide these credentials, not translation.

4.7 Translators in reviews

Like bibliographical information, reviews do not form a uniform genre or practice. Sometimes the translator is very visible in the review; on other occasions, there is no mention of the translator or of the book being a translation. This sub-section concentrates on reviews from the years 1869–1880 from the journal *Kirjallinen Kuukauslehti* ('Literary Monthly', abbreviated here as *KK*) and 1897–1913 from the Finnish language journal *Virittäjä* (abbreviated here as *Vir.*), founded in 1897. Reviews of translated (and original) literature formed a large proportion of the contents of both journals. The reviews were sometimes long, two to three pages; sometimes a translated book was mentioned in passing, especially in linguistic essays in *Virittäjä*. Therefore, the exact number of mentions is impossible to give; suffice it to say that there were dozens of mentions of translated literature each year, either in short squibs or longer reviews, even articles about translating.

The Kirjallinen Kuukauslehti reviews were often favourable in tone and frequently emphasised the translators' personal qualities: "Here is a man who perhaps more than any other has shown that our language can be employed to express modern poetry" (all translations of quotations are mine) (*KK* 5: 116; 1873), or "The translator may congratulate himself on having succeeded in rendering the text so close to the original" (*KK* 3: 73, 1875).

Virittäjä reviews usually dealt with individual errors (grammar, collocation, lexicon, style, use of dialects, etc.) and were often written in passive voice

“there is vacillation in morphology” (*Vir.* 1898: 53); “words have not always been understood” (*Vir.* 1898: 83) but there are also some cases where the translator is referred to: “The pronoun *tuo* [‘that’] is too much favored by the translator” (*Vir.* 1898: 54); “The translator is, unnecessarily, fond of rare words” (*Vir.* 1898: 83). In both cases, the Finnish word used for translator is ‘suomentaja’ (*Finniciser*). Translator, in the reviews, is the person who produces, decides on and has preferences about the options available to him/her:

- the translator has often treated his mother tongue without necessary care [...] one should imagine that the translator has all the prerequisites for a successful translation. (*Vir.* 1904: 113-114)
- the translator has used too commonplace language when higher register would have been preferable. (*Vir.* 1907: 5-7)

In 1906 (119-121) there is a longish article on the challenges of translation by Jalo Kalima, who writes about poor translations and translators. His suggestion is that translators should network and collaborate in order to solve problems and coordinate to share their translation solutions. There should be an archive where translators could store their know-how and translation solutions; Kalima suggests *Virittäjä* to be such an archive. This article is a rare instance of addressing translators of fiction as a group.

In reviews, then, the understanding of ‘translator’ is in connection with the book. Translators also come across as active agents who have the means and the power to influence the state of the language they work on and the Finnish literature. The only article where translators are regarded as a community is the one by Jalo Kalima, but the article deals with literary and linguistic issues, not translators’ position as such.

5. Discussion

The focus of this article is attribution: how people were named in connection with translation, by themselves and by their contemporaries in the late 19th century Finland. The research question presented at the beginning of this article concerned when and in what situations and contexts a person called him-/herself a translator, and when other people called them translators.

Translators in state administration stand out in the data: they were explicitly called translators; that was their position. Fiction translators were attributed translatorship in the obvious contexts of bibliographies and reviews, but otherwise they did not tend to be called translators. Their credentials in many cases related to their other occupations, degrees and tasks. Attribution of translatorship in the case of fiction was almost always in relation to a specific book: it was the translated book that determined the attribution, not the translator’s daily work or occupation.

Translation resists categorisation into clearly defined/definable units; so does the notion of the translator. Historical data from the late 19th century Finland point towards translators being a diffuse category, people who were referred to as translators mostly when they were in a certain role, that of producing translations, but not in their everyday lives and careers. This is understandable from the point of view that producing translations was not a full-time occupation, and 'translatorship' existed in relation to the texts translated, not as day-to-day work, earning a livelihood and (perhaps) being identified as members of a group called translators. What to our eyes seems like a huge translation effort resulting in a large body of fiction and non-fiction texts was largely put together by a heterogeneous group of people variously occupied with translating, writing, teaching, editing newspapers — at different stages of their lives or working parallelly on different projects and jobs.

We may have been applying our present understanding of translators (as members of a profession we know, train and study) to a heterogeneous group of people from the past, trying to tie them up with our project of professionalisation. A more nuanced picture emerges when looking at the contexts where translators were topicalised in the past. In addition to differences with today's translators, there are, notwithstanding, also many parallels: occupational insecurity, multitasking, individual entrepreneurship, and what we now would call crowdsourcing: joint translation efforts and networking, work carried out for altruistic reasons and sometimes without remuneration.

Finnish 19th-century translators were non-professional, in many meanings of the word: not trained in translating, not often salaried; sometimes not even visible, and not institutionalised as socially coherent groups. Most of the time they seemingly did not regard themselves as translators. These features relate them to other literary and social agents of their time like journalists. Translating was a role within the totality of a person's life and activities. The full extent of translatorship in history remains to be studied, as does the shifting between the different roles of people who translated. In order to study these people further, we need to step outside the confines of studying only translators and examine all literary occupations conjointly. This, hopefully, may help us understand the later social organisation of professional groupings.

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Biography

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