

***COLLABORATIVE TRANSLATION: FROM THE RENAISSANCE TO THE DIGITAL AGE* EDITED BY ANTHONY CORDINGLEY AND CÉLINE FRIGAU MANNING**

*Collaborative Translation: From the Renaissance to the Digital Age*, edited by Anthony Cordingley and Céline Frigau Manning. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2017. £100.  
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*What is collaborating, collaboration? What is translating, translation?* (1). The stereotypical image of a lonely translator, presumably working in a relatively small room, is defied by the editors at the very beginning of the book. Drawing on the expertise of experienced translation researchers, *Collaborative Translation: From the Renaissance to the Digital Age* (2017), edited by Anthony Cordingley and Céline Frigau Manning, delves into various aspects of ‘collaborative translation’, crossing numerous temporal and spatial borders. Based on insightful case studies, the concept of ‘collaborative translation’ is subjected to fragmentation and unification as the analysis moves between practice and theory, all the while raising intriguing issues from the Renaissance to our contemporary, technology-driven world.

In Chapter 1, Cordingley and Manning demonstrate how challenging it is to define ‘collaborative translation’ in different European languages due to the intrinsic link shared by these two words. Laying the foundations for later chapters, they include both nominal and relational definitions of ‘collaborative translation’, addressing both the ‘non-essential, open and dynamic’ nature of collaborative translation activities, and the propensity for the ‘multiple definitions of the term to evolve from changes in its elements and the relationships between them at a given moment’ respectively (3). This inclusive definition takes various stakeholders of translation activities into consideration and helps to structure the forthcoming discussions. Building upon this definition, the authors contribute to untangling the myth of singular authorship. They acknowledge the individuality of translators with ‘unique personality, different aptitudes, styles of writing and ways of reading’ (14). However, rather than reinforcing the idea of absolute singularity, they bring out the concept of ‘harmony’—‘a new voice emerges in its own right, with its unique texture and range’ (22). This consolidates their position—discussing collaborative translation activities in terms of unity, while accepting individual rights embedded in these processes—which is exemplified in following chapters.

The three parts in the main body comprise eleven chapters. Part 1: *Reconceptualizing the Translator: Renaissance and Enlightenment Perspectives*, opens with Belén Bistué’s challenge to Italian historian Leonardo Bruni’s (1370-1444) definition of ‘correct translation’ as a ‘single task [that] should be performed by a single translator’ (44), drawing attention to the explicit yet self-contradictory exclusion of collaborative translation arising from this definition (35). The author shows that, in the context of early modern European unification, this model met the need for translating Greek and Arabic manuscripts. However, under contemporary circumstances, it is beneficial for scholars to re-evaluate collaborative translation models. Following this idea, Françoise Decroisette, in Chapter 3, showcases collaborative translation practices in contemporary theatrical settings—coined as ‘shared’ translation (49)—based on her experience of translating Italian playwright Carlo Goldoni’s (1707-1793) comedies from Italian into French. The author shows that apart from the prototypical involvement of stakeholders, theatre translation includes different media of interpretation based on both textual and non-textual elements, which calls into question the idea of ‘faithfulness’ due to its lack of relevance in the absolute (59). In Chapter 4, Jean-Louis Fournel and Jean-Claude Zancarini introduce technology into the existing discussion

on the temporal gap, reflecting on their experiences translating Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540), Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498), and Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527). Once again, the keyword ‘harmony’ emerges when the issue of orality is examined, revisiting the art of translation proposed in Chapter 1. Noticeably, the authors question the credibility of certain words (‘fidelity’ and ‘clarity’, for example) that translators use to describe their conception of translation in contemporary contexts, suggesting that these terms fail to cover the dynamic ‘actual reality’ of the translation process, which, with the help of technological development, is undergoing extensive research (83).

Part 2, *Collaborating with the Author*, starts with Patrick Hersant’s informative typology of various collaborative exchanges in translation practice (Chapter 5). Hersant notes that some presuppositions regarding the collaboration between authors and translators, such as the utility of the author’s participation, are not necessarily true (103). Based on this observation, Hersant argues that efficiency plays an essential part when discussing collaborative translation. This pragmatic insight is enriched by Olga Anokhina in Chapter 6 through an intriguing example based on the collaborative experience of Vladimir Nabokov and his translators into English and French, presenting different modes of author-translator collaboration conditioned by various power relations. She observes that in real-life scenarios, practical factors such as copyright issues (especially nowadays) and stakeholders’ social impact with regards to the market condition could leave these presuppositions at fault, which resonates with Hersant’s conclusions regarding the collaborative efficiency (and compromise) of each stakeholder. Proceeding with the example of two seminars (1978 and 2011) organised by Günter Grass, Céline Letawe sheds light on the discussion of ‘translatability’ from a translator’s (not researcher’s) perspective (137), bridging the gap between theory and practice. With the intention of facilitating the translator’s work, these seminars grappled with Grass’s seemingly untranslatable texts, making use of concrete translation strategies. It is shown that similar difficulties faced by translators working with different target languages may share common solutions, which could contribute to overall efficiency (133; see also Chapter 9, 184-185). Additionally, similarities and differences embedded in this process reveal the collaborative nature of translation practice. In Chapter 8, Abigail Lang offers more practical insights, reviewing the Royaumont seminars hosted in Paris during 1983 to 2000—a collaborative poetry translation project which involved poets translating the work of their contemporaries. This chapter provides concrete examples of participants’ reflections, and concludes the section by presenting a comprehensive picture of collaborative translation in an experimental laboratory environment.

Moving away from examples of author-translator collaboration from the recent past, Part 3 offers a detailed insight towards an *Environment of Collaboration* fuelled by advancing technology and modernisation. In Chapter 9, Anna Zielinska-Elliott and Ika Kaminka review three conventional types of collaboration—collaboration between the author and one translator, between the author and a group of translators working in different languages, and between two or more translators working on the same text into the same language (169). They then move on to the fourth type—an emerging collaboration model between translators of the same work into different languages based on a solution-oriented approach (174). Through case studies, they discuss the concern with collaborative efficiency, and shed light on the dual liberation of author and translator in practice. Chapter 10 turns to a specific collaborative phenomenon—translation crowdsourcing—driven by the ‘technological turn’ in Translation Studies (192). According to the author, Miguel A. Jiménez-Crespo, the most important feature of crowdsourcing is ‘its dependency on collaborative web-mediated environments’ (194). With this foregrounded, crowdsourcing and its subtypes are mapped onto the framework of Translation Studies, including a detailed review of methodological and theoretical issues. In Chapter 11, Gillian Lane-Mercier reviews

Canadian institutional collaboration and its implications for multi/bi-lingual countries regarding the shaping power of translations influenced by identity issues related to nationalism. Chapter 12 by Michael Cronin approaches translation from the angle of a relatively novel post-human ecology. This draws attention to the value of a translator's individual activity in relation to collective responsibility at a global level, and inspires the reader to think and digest the whole book from a brand new perspective.

Overall, this edited volume presents insightful case studies elaborating on various forms of collaborative translation, and includes detailed lists of references directing further reading. The scope of this book, ranging from the Renaissance to the digital age, provides the reader with an efficient exploration of the topic. With the theme in mind, it is interesting to notice that five out of the twelve chapters are themselves translations (but only with the translators' names at the end of each chapter in brackets). Also, the idea of harmony in the process of collaborative translation mentioned by several authors somehow speaks to the Taoist idea of achieving harmony through balancing the relationships between different forces in a collective whole. However, in this volume, only Japanese translation examples are included as representative of the contemporary Eastern world, leaving the vast realm of the early modern East untouched. Despite this, however, this book invites readers to think about the potential perspectives with which one can approach detailed case studies, and raises important questions as to whether to view translation pragmatically as an efficiency-driven and solution-oriented activity, or as an intellectual-enriching activity in its own right.