



UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ



Global  
Literary  
Studies Research  
Lab

CfP- Book proposal

***Digital Translation History. Processing Historical Data with New Methodologies***

To be published at a top-ranked international publisher

Coordinated/edited by Diana Roig-Sanz and Philipp Hofeneder

Potential collaborators (in alphabetical order): Alessandra Balzani and Clorinda Donato, Christina Bezzari, Lynne Bowker, Lucía Campanella, Renée Desjardins, Laura Fólica, David D. Kim, Philippe Lacour, Claire Larssonneur, Sara Rovira-Esteva, Jan Rybicki, Sanjun Sun, Raluca Tanasescu and Chris Tanasescu, Ondrej Vimr, Judy Wakabayashi, Setsuko Yokohama.

**Description**

In the last twenty years, digital humanities made a splash in the literary field<sup>1</sup>, but digital methods have slowly seeped into translation studies and, particularly, into translation history<sup>2</sup>. Undoubtedly, there are multiple definitions of digital humanities<sup>3</sup>, but there is still no consensus regarding how they can be applied to translation studies and to translation history, more specifically. As it's well-known, digital humanities methods have been mainly related to corpora studies<sup>4</sup>, bibliometric and bibliographical research<sup>5</sup>, translation technology<sup>6</sup>, and the gathering and analysis of online available metadata<sup>7</sup>. However, these research avenues do not always consider the whole range of methodological possibilities and practical applications on which the digital humanities are based on. Among them, we would like to highlight the

<sup>1</sup> See Moretti (2005, 2013); Jockers (2013); Underwood (2014); Klein and Gold (2016); Bode (2017); Piper (2017).

<sup>2</sup> See Wakabayashi (2019); Tanasescu (2020); Bowker (2021); Desjardins, Larssonneur and Lacour (2021); Roig-Sanz and Fólica (2021); Roig-Sanz, Tanasescu, and Ikoff (2024).

<sup>3</sup> See Roth (2019).

<sup>4</sup> See Olohan (2004).

<sup>5</sup> See Rovira-Esteva, Orero, and Franco Aixelá (2015); Rovira-Esteva, Franco Aixelá, and Olalla-Soler (2019).

<sup>6</sup> See Kenny (2017).

<sup>7</sup> See the following databases as examples of this sort of research: <https://radicaltranslations.org/>; <https://krp.dhi-moskau.org/>; <https://hueb.iued.uni-heidelberg.de/de/>; <https://trace.unileon.es/en/>; <http://dbgw.finlit.fi/kaannokset/index.php?lang=ENG>; <https://dlbt.univie.ac.at/>; <https://belgien.uepol.uni-mainz.de/>; <http://www.translatedliteratureportugal.org/> Also the outcomes of the Beltrans project: <https://www.kbr.be/en/projects/beltrans/>.

general principles of long-term preservation, digital editions of (historical) translations, as well as the enrichment with further semantic data, especially in the case of historical translation databases, or the use of AI. As humanities researchers we still tend to think “small”, but we have now the chance to think “big”<sup>8</sup> and we urgently need some theoretical and methodological reflections, as well as empirical case studies that allow us to set the grounds of the discipline and offer general standards for our community.

Without a doubt, the use of digital humanities methods in translation history is not yet expanded and we may observe significant inequalities in terms of applying digital methods, as well as regarding access and production of digital documents. Data-driven approaches to translation history have scarcely been developed in many geographical areas (Africa, Latin America, or even Asia), and they have not been sufficiently applied to the analysis of cultural relations and agents of translation from a research perspective. In this respect, there is an urgent need to encourage source-based and empirical research that is able to locate, at large scale, translations and translators in the global cultural ecosystem and over time. This book aims at institutionalizing what we have previously called “big translation history”<sup>9</sup> in the general framework of computational numerical humanities<sup>10</sup>, which means to apply digital methods to identify patterns of cultural phenomena or word use, as well as to build networks of relationships and visualize spatial information. This book also wants to reflect on the relation between public digital humanities<sup>11</sup> and translation history. This means to discuss the role and relevance of digital archives, digitized cultural heritage, open access scholarship, and open data in relation to translation within an historical dimension. To this end, the book will provide theoretical and methodological reflections, as well as specific case studies applying quantitative digital methods to help establish the discipline and amend centrist approaches to translation history by generating new and reliable data from a wide range of geographical areas and sources that might be lesser known. Likewise, we aim at encouraging digital editions of translations for a qualitative analysis, an important research path that is still missing. In this respect, the book will appropriately engage in the general discussion on the use of metadata and digital objects for research purposes, but also in the work related to digital editions of translations, and the use of data mining and big data approaches to support conventional research. We will promote broader and deeper searches and analyses, as well as examine what networks, key actors, and translation flows arise from large-scale research. A digital translation history offers innovative research and also revises our conceptual frameworks, on the basis of newly revealed connections or, on the contrary, lack of circulation and exchange. This gives us the possibility to enrich existing case studies with a quantitative approach based on a meta level. Digital methods applied to translation history will also allow us to ask specific questions of the sources that we could not otherwise pose, or provide with new answers to previously analyzed topics. For example, it may nuance the view of both Western and non-Western translators as predominantly white and male, and it may also change the significance of a particular author on a broader scale. Thus, we encourage chapter proposals that can collect, clean, process, and make metadata on historical

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<sup>8</sup> See Roig-Sanz and Fóllica (2021).

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>10</sup> See Roth (2019).

<sup>11</sup> See Stommel (2018).

translation phenomena, as well as translators, publicly available, but also prepare digital editions, discuss long term preservation with subsequent standards, or digital humanities methods and tools such as topic modeling, text analysis and encoding, stylometry, or data visualization, always applied to translation within an historical dimension.

On a different note, this book will encourage open data to the academic public by publishing the data under an open license that can contribute to a scientific commons that other researchers can build on. It will also arise a more conscious approach in sharing one's own data. In this respect, the book is very committed to advance towards a future academia that promotes sustainable collective work. Within all these criteria, we encourage chapter proposals that may focus on the following issues:

- 1) Theoretical and methodological challenges when applying digital approaches and digital methods to translation history. Specifically, we encourage papers discussing what is the value of the digital in this debate and what are the challenges we encounter when applying digital humanities methods to translation studies and, more specifically, to translation history, as there are several standards that do not have their origin in the Humanities and their application in translation is sometimes difficult.
- 2) Reflections on collaboration, digitization processes, enrichment with semantic data, and data sharing between institutions which can help balance out inequalities between spaces in terms of representation and power. We encourage chapter proposals on how the management, cleaning, modeling, and interpretation of data on a large scale can contribute to uncovering hidden data from the archive, as well as nuancing hegemonic analysis of translation flows and/or agents of translation to help decentralize the history of translation. Along these lines, we encourage chapter proposals offering new insights into digital translation archives as spaces that can help understand both the translation process and the translator's professional and personal biography. Chapter proposals on translation and digital archives of historical periodicals are also welcome.
- 3) Specific case studies on the use of digital methods to explore translation as a social space of historical and cultural making. In this respect, we encourage chapter proposals discussing how digital methods - using both little data and big data - can help promote research on translation practices and intercultural exchanges. We welcome papers addressing translation and cultural transfers within a data-driven approach that allows us to explore spaces of translation<sup>12</sup> and/or global translation zones<sup>13</sup> where translation is shaped. We particularly encourage (though it is not exclusive) chapter proposals shedding light into spaces of translation that have been, up to now, neglected. For example, data-driven approaches to translation flows related to Asia, Latin America, or Africa, or empirical work regarding the translation of indigenous or less-translated languages.
- 4) The use of digital humanities to shed light into agents of translation and deeply explore their relevance in the building of translation practices. We will particularly welcome research on the use of digital tools applied to restore the role of forgotten agents such as women, Black authors, and Black translators, and/or other agents that have been minoritized by mainstream history. With the aim of rethinking translation histories with a

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<sup>12</sup> See Hofeneder (2023) for the concept of spaces of translation, and Roig-Sanz and Kvirikashvili (forthcoming 2024) for that of global translation zones.

<sup>13</sup> See Roig-Sanz and Kvirikashvili (forthcoming 2024). See also Roig-Sanz (2022).

gender and inclusive perspective, including situated and partial knowledge<sup>14</sup>, we welcome proposals that may contribute to highlighting the women's relevance in translation history by applying, for example, stylometry and identifying a certain way of translating a text. Other potential case studies can be related, for example, to the building of historical transnational networks of women that were established through cooperation, collaboration, and spaces of sharing and exchange.

- 5) Any discussion on how digital methods and digital tools can contribute to current research on digital heritage in translation and on to what extent digital methods and the use of AI, for example, contribute (or not) to the democratization of research in the humanities<sup>15</sup> and, specifically, in translation studies and translation history. Likewise, general reflections on visualizations not as a mere representation of findings/output, but as an additional method for analysis are also welcome<sup>16</sup>.

The time span of the book goes from the beginning of history to contemporary times, as we aim to offer as many examples, tools, and approaches as possible. In that respect, the book will welcome case studies from different times and places, and will promote a *long durée* perspective that analyzes translation in a historical continuum and considers parallel processes too. Collaborators from a wide range of disciplines are welcome, as long as their digital humanities methods show a clear impact and usability for translation studies and translation history more specifically. The editors of the book will write a long paper to help establish the field, explore its disciplinary entanglements, and analyze how digital translation history is transforming humanities research.

### **Submissions:**

Authors should submit an abstract (300 words), affiliation, bio-note and a short reference list to Diana Roig Sanz (dsanzr@uoc.edu) and Philip Hofeneder (philipp.hofeneder@uni-graz.at) **before June 15th 2024.**

All papers will be published in a top-ranked publisher, and will undergo a double-blind peer review process. The expected publication calendar is as follows:

**15th June 2024:** submission of abstracts

**12th August 2024 at the latest:** acceptance or rejection of book chapters proposals

**15th December 2024:** first submission of a **7500 word paper.**

**January-March 2025:** double-blind peer review process.

**April- May:** revision of first draft

**June:** second and final submission.

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<sup>14</sup> See Haraway (1988). See also Castro and Ergun (2017) for feminist translation studies.

<sup>15</sup> See Coeckelbergh (2023).

<sup>16</sup> See Drucker (2016, 2020).

**Expected book publication:** Fall 2025.

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