

INSTITUT D'ÉTUDES  
AVANCÉES DE PARIS

Workshop

# Knowledge translation on a global scale

Thursday, 12 and Friday, 13 January 2017

Organized by **Ana Carolina Hosne** (Paris IAS - National University of San Martín) and **Antonella Romano** (Centre Alexandre Koyré, EHESS)



**CAK**  
Centre Alexandre-Koyré  
Histoire des sciences et des techniques  
UMR 8560 EHESS CNRS MNHN

Hôtel de Lauzun  
17 quai d'Anjou 75004 Paris  
+ 33 (0)1 56 81 00 52  
information@paris-iea.fr  
www.paris-iea.fr  
@IEAdeParis

# Presentation

---

The aim of this workshop is to contribute to the discussion about the complex and multi-faceted interactions engendered in the translation of knowledge between cultures across space and time, as well as the aspects inevitably involved in the process of both its transmission and reception. The contributions address the translation of concepts, also examining the lexical changes initiated by the influx of new or foreign knowledge, and that of practices, i.e. concrete examples to be found in the process of translating knowledge, which in turn entails its interpretation and adaptation.

This workshop seeks to analyze the different dimensions and aspects of knowledge translation: linguistic/epistemic, as a historical process, as mutations and transformations of words, actions and practices, also exploring the motives of agents involved in knowledge translation processes, among others. Moreover, knowledge translation involves circulation processes, which lead us to pose the following questions: Why, how and where does knowledge circulate? In turn, this implies the compelling task of looking into different scales, global and local. In terms of materialization of knowledge translation, when does it take place? Is it preceded by different itineraries of knowledge circulation, collection and elaboration? Conceiving translation as transformation involves tracing the origins of new forms of knowledge and construction of meaning from a cross-cultural perspective. Last but not least, appropriation is also part of all these processes, when translation could involve appropriation by the receiver, but not necessarily.

# Program

---

Thursday, 12 January

---

14:00 Welcome and introduction

---

Session 1: Misunderstandings and incongruities: the thorny issues of knowledge translation

---

Chair: Laura León Llerena (Northwestern University, USA)

---

14:45 **Capucine Boidin** (IHEAL/Paris 3)  
*Traductions, métissages, doubles malentendus ou co-mensurations dans les missions jésuites du Paraguay*

---

15:30 **Fabrizio Speziale** (Paris 3)  
*Lexical Analogies and Conceptual Incongruities: the Persian Translation of Ayurvedic theory in Early-Modern South Asia*

---

16:15 Coffee break

---

Session 2: Translating science and the natural world

---

Chair: Antonella Romano (CAK/EHESS)

---

16:30 **Thomas Brignon** (ENS Lyon)  
*De Madrid à Paracuaría en passant par Mexico et vice versa : le naturalisme salutaire de Juan Eusebio Nieremberg traduit en guarani dans les missions jésuites du Paraguay*

---

17:15 **Oury Goldman** (CRH-EHESS)  
*Translating Geographical Knowledge in Sixteenth-Century France*

---

18:00 Roundtable discussion

Friday, 13 January

---

Session 3: Translation in between texts and material culture

---

Chair: Ana Carolina Hosne (Paris IAS / UNSAM)

---

9:00 **Monica Klasing Chen** (University of Leiden)  
*Chinese painting mnemonics: Translating practical knowledge*

---

9:45 **Laura León Llerena** (Northwestern University, USA)  
*Translating stones: dealing with Indigenous material culture in colonial Peru*

---

10:30 **Michael Nylan** (Paris IAS / UC Berkeley)  
*One China or small textual communities: the evidence from excavated and received texts*

---

11:15 Coffee break

---

Session 4: What lies beneath knowledge translation: Transmission, reception and mediation

---

Chair: Antonella Romano (CAK/EHESS)

---

11:30 **Corinne Lefèvre** (CEIAS-EHESS / CNRS)  
*The transmission of Western political culture and history at the Mughal court, ca. 1600*

---

12:15 **Xavier Ortells-Nicolau** (University of Barcelona)  
*Reception and Mediation of Foreign Works on China in Spain, 1850-1950*

---

13:00 Lunch break

---

14:30 Roundtable discussion

# Abstracts

---

Session 1: Misunderstandings and incongruities: the thorny issues of knowledge translation

---

**Capucine Boidin** (IHEAL/Paris 3)

***Traductions, métissages, doubles malentendus ou co-mensurations dans les missions jésuites du Paraguay***

Comment analyser la formation dans les missions jésuites du Brésil et du Paraguay (1609-1767) d'un vocabulaire catholique et monarchique en tupi-guarani ? Cette émergence relève-t-elle de processus de traduction ou plus exactement de co-mensurations et d'alignements mutuels au sein d'un « espace translinguïstique » (Hanks and Severi 2014)? S'agirait-il de métissage (Gruzinski 1999), d'une adoption stratégique des catégories ibériques par les indiens ("middle ground" de Richard White (1991)? ou d'identifications mutuelles erronées (Lockhart 1999) et d'erreurs d'interprétation contrôlées (Viveiros de Castro 2004)? Nous réfléchissons à ces questions en resituant les usages linguistiques et la performativité des mots tupi-guarani dans leur contexte historique d'émergence. En effet, suivant les situations coloniales dans lesquelles les missions jésuites sont imbriquées (alliance et commerce entre colons et autochtones, asservissement et exploitation économique des indiens, assujettissement à la couronne et contrôle du travail natif à l'intérieur des missions), les mêmes mots guarani n'ont pas les mêmes effets de signification, ni les mêmes référents et équivalents en langues européennes. Par exemple si *mburuvicha* équivaut à Roi dans la situation d'alliance, il correspond à cacique dans la seconde et à gouverneur dans la troisième.

**Fabrizio Speziale** (Paris 3)

***Lexical Analogies and Conceptual Incongruities: the Persian Translation of Ayurvedic theory in Early-Modern South Asia***

This paper examines the way in which Ayurvedic theory of the *tridoṣa* is translated and interpreted in Persian treatises on Indian medicine written in early modern South Asia. The epistemic approach of Muslim authors, based on the conceptual categories of the Greco-Arabic scientific thought, do not aim to extend the existing Persian technical lexicon. The concept of *doṣa* is rendered through the Arabic term *ḥilṭ* (humour) and the three substances of the *tridoṣa* are reduced to the analogous categories of the Greco-Arabic school. This is only apparently a congruous and compatible translation between these two lexica. The translation of the humoral notions by using homologous terms is a delicate hermeneutical action that leads to redefining the conceptual value of some of the terms and the categories involved in the translation.

---

Session 2: Translating science and the natural world

---

**Thomas Brignon** (ENS Lyon)

***De Madrid à Paracuaria en passant par Mexico et vice versa : le naturalisme salutaire de Juan Eusebio Nieremberg traduit en guarani dans les missions jésuites du Paraguay***

Premier titulaire de la chaire de philosophie naturelle du Collège Impérial de Madrid, le jésuite Juan Eusebio

Nieremberg (1595-1658) y développe une singulière épistémologie baroque, fondée sur l'application de la méthode exégétique au monde naturel et sur une lecture moralisée du règne animal. À partir d'une analyse des bibliothèques et des écrits issus des réductions du Paraguay, nous montrerons que ce paradigme providentialiste a joui d'une diffusion globale jusqu'à la fin du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle par le biais des réseaux éditoriaux, des collègues et des missions jésuites. La «philosophie nouvelle» de Nieremberg est pourtant elle-même le fruit du processus inverse : la traduction en termes chrétiens de savoirs américains produits par l'expédition mexicaine de Francisco Hernández et par l'expérience de terrain des missionnaires (notamment paraguayens) de la Compagnie. Comme nous le soulignerons, cette origine transatlantique se manifeste dans la mobilisation de zoonymes amérindiens et dans une vraie porosité vis-à-vis des représentations natives. Deux parti-pris qu'adoptent à leur tour les jésuites de Paracuaria, comme nous aurons l'occasion de le démontrer en analysant leur tentative de traduction en guarani du bestiaire salubre mobilisé par Nieremberg dans son grand traité ascétique, le *De la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno*.

---

**Oury Goldman** (CRH-EHESS)

***Translating Geographical Knowledge in Sixteenth-Century France***

Translations have become one of the privileged tools for social scientists to analyze phenomena that derived from cross-cultural and global encounters. The Renaissance period (ca 1450-1600), in Europe but also elsewhere in the world, was characterized by an increase of translations practices, not only linked to the so-called

“rediscovery of Antiquity” or to the affirmation of vernacular and national languages within Europe, but also to the intensification of the circulation of goods, people, knowledge and ideas across the globe that occurred in this same period. Indeed, during that era, the overseas expansion of the Iberian empires was followed by the production of a vast array of texts and materials, which were translated into a variety of European languages. By examining the translations of sixteenth century accounts of the «New Worlds» into French during that same period, we will review the main issues raised by these attempts to locally translate a knowledge that carried forms of global knowledge. By focusing on paratextual elements inserted in the translated books by people active in the translation process, such as translators, printers or booksellers, we will try to show how they presented themselves as brokers and agents of cultural exchange willing to offer French audience fresh and hitherto unseen accounts of the regions of the world explored and conquered by Europeans at that time, but also the limits of these claims.

---

Session 3: Translation in between texts and material culture

---

**Monica Klasing Chen** (University of Leiden)

*Chinese painting mnemonics: Translating practical knowledge*

Chinese treatises on the practice of traditional portraiture highlight the importance of memorizing the sitter's features before putting the brush to paper. Attentively observing the features of a face and recording these in one's mind was the starting point for every portrait. This paper discusses the different approaches and structures that were employed by

professional painters to analyze a face and aid memorization. It compares three treatises on portraiture written during the eighteenth century: Jiang Ji's 蔣驥 Secret essentials for transmitting the spirit (Chuan shen mi yao 傳神祕要), Shen Zongqian's 沈宗騫 chapter on "Transmitting the spirit" in his Jiezhou's Compilation on the Study of Painting (Jiezhou xuehua bian 芥舟學畫編), and the fourth volume of the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting, which contains the "Secret Formula for Painting Portraits" (Xie zhen mi jue 寫真祕訣), by Ding Gao 丁皋.

This paper shows that the schemata used for painting presented in these treatises were partly adapted from other fields of knowledge in which practice played an important role, such as physiognomy and calligraphy. Furthermore, it argues that traditional memorization techniques greatly influenced the format in which knowledge was presented to facilitate its transmission. Such processes of adaptation shaped the practices of portraiture.

---

**Laura León Llerena** (Northwestern University, USA)

***Translating stones: dealing with Indigenous material culture in colonial Peru***

This paper discusses the challenges missionaries faced when translating terms that linked concepts of the sacred (Christian and non-Christian) with Andean material culture in late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century Peru. Focusing on colonial texts that dealt with the translation of the term 'writing' from Spanish to Quechua, and the translation of 'rock' or 'stone' from Quechua to Spanish, I aim to address the study of 'extirpation of idolatries' in Peru from a different angle, namely the complicated

relation between language, translation and material culture.

---

**Michael Nylan** (Paris IAS / UC Berkeley)

***One China or small textual communities: the evidence from excavated and received texts***

My talk will consist of two parts, the first of which will discuss the available evidence for the existence of textual communities in early China, suggesting (as Matsumoto Masaaki already did in 1966) that both the received texts and scientifically excavated evidence support the notion of small textual communities with their own lines of transmission. Although this picture of early manuscript culture is consistent with evidence across many other early cultures, it is ignored or questioned by those who prefer to posit a Chinese exceptionalism. The second half of my paper will turn to some evidence dating from the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), a time centuries after the widespread use of printed sources, asking the degree to which the advent and spread of printing made «one China» a virtual textual empire. While textual communities obviously expanded, there is evidence that knowledge transmission often continued within rather small textual communities in a surprising number of cases.

---

Session 4: What lies beneath knowledge translation: Transmission, reception and mediation

---

**Corinne Lefèvre** (CEIAS-EHESS / CNRS)

***The transmission of Western political culture and history at the Mughal court, ca. 1600***

The transmission of Western political culture

and history at the Mughal court is a question that has long been neglected by the historians working on the empire founded by Babur in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the scarcity of Indo-Persian texts dealing with Firangis (Europeans) being often interpreted as “the” sign of the Mughals’ lack of interest for things Western. While Mughal writings on the West can hardly be compared in quantity to the massive European production documenting the encounter with the empire, there are nevertheless—as pointed out more recently by a number of historians and art historians—a number of textual and visual materials that shed light on some interesting cases of circulation in this domain. Among these materials are two texts written in Persian by a quite unusual pair: the Jesuit missionary Jeronimo Xavier and the Mughal scholar ‘Abd al-Sattar b. Qasim Lahauri. My paper will consist in a first foray into Sattar’s *Samarat al-falasifa* (*The fruits of philosophers*, 1603), a history of the great kings and philosophers of Antiquity, and into Xavier’s *Adab al-saltanat* (*The duties of kingship*, 1609), a mirror for princes dedicated to emperor Jahangir (r.1605-27).

---

**Xavier Ortells-Nicolau** (University of Barcelona)

***Reception and Mediation of Foreign Works on China in Spain, 1850-1950***

While Spain did not take part in the Opium Wars, it nonetheless benefited from the resulting treaties that gradually allowed foreign presence and trade in Chinese cities. Spaniards enjoyed extraterritoriality rights, exploited maritime commerce lines and established numerous missionary outposts, peaking in a colony of about seven hundred people in the mid-1920s. Simultaneously, the circulation of knowledge and information about China increased in Spain, first via the translation of English and

French works and growingly by means of first-hand accounts of missionaries, diplomats and travellers. The materials presented in the China-Spain Archive (<http://ace.uoc.edu/>) by the research group Alter (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya) attest a wider and more significant presence of China in the intellectual spheres of Spain in the period under study than it has been previously acknowledged. Members of Alter are also analysing critically these materials to question a recurrent monolithic understanding of both the Western presence in the treaty ports and the Western construction of a Chinese imaginary.

This paper introduces the role played by some of the key actors in the reception and production of China-related knowledge in Spain between the mid-19<sup>th</sup> and mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and focuses on aspects such as literary influence and mediation, and the importance of the local context (i.e., the termination of Spain’s last colonies, the Second Republic, the Civil War) in the appropriation of the unstable and malleable “China” subject.



École Pratique  
des Hautes Études



ENS



# Practical informations

---

## Venue

---

Institut d'études avancées de Paris  
Hôtel de Lauzun - Île Saint-Louis  
17 quai d'Anjou - 75004  
M° Pont-Marie or Sully-Morland (line 7)

## Contact

---

01 56 81 00 52 - [information@paris-iea.fr](mailto:information@paris-iea.fr)

## WiFi

---

Network: IEA-Public  
Password: IEAParis123

## Connect with us

---

Website: [www.paris-iea.fr](http://www.paris-iea.fr)  
Facebook : [www.facebook.com/IEAdeParis](http://www.facebook.com/IEAdeParis)  
Twitter : @IEAdeParis