

la Guerra Fría y su añeja animadversión hacia las corrientes comunistas, por lo que en general no se esforzó en mantener una posición decidida contra la dictadura franquista. En lo que se refiere a las buenas relaciones entre Suiza y España, abundan los panegíricos sobre la economía, el turismo y la buena acogida que tuvieron los emigrantes españoles en Suiza. Por lo demás, las reacciones oficiales cual respuesta a los actos represivos ejercidos por la dictadura, fueron pocas las veces que se aventuraron a traspasar las marcas de lo meramente simbólico. Como era de esperar, la llegada de la democracia tras la muerte del dictador fue aplaudida por los medios de comunicación suizos, desde hacía años seguidores atentos siempre del paulatino desmadejamiento del franquismo y del devenir de la democracia. Y a la vez, el autor muestra con gran detalle los avales concedidos y la simpatía brindada por los medios de comunicación a los actores principales del proceso de de-

mocratización, mas sin silenciar su preocupación por los peligros, los repetidos sobresaltos y los riesgos.

La bibliografía se apoya en una documentación exhaustiva y en fuentes que aún no han sido publicadas, procedentes de los principales archivos federales y cantonales, de libros de memorias, folletines y opúsculos políticos varios, de periódicos de tirada nacional (en los que están presentes todas las lenguas del país), de periódicos de partidos y de material audiovisual y electrónico disponible. Y el todo sin desatender las bellas letras, entre las que figuran las obras señeras y específicas de Serge Ehrensperger, Thomas Hürliemann, Hugo Loetscher y otros.

En suma: una obra de gran interés para los políticos y el público de lengua española, por lo que recomiendo calurosamente y cuanto antes la traducción.

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4. HISTORIA Y CIENCIAS SOCIALES: AMÉRICA LATINA

Victoria Ríos Castaño: *Translation as Conquest: Sahagún and Universal History of the Things of New Spain*. Madrid / Frankfurt a. M.: Iberoamericana / Vervuert 2014. (Parecos y Australes. Ensayos de Cultura de la Colonia, 13) 320 páginas.

During the past two decades, anthropologists and historians have quarreled over the question of whether Bernardino de Sahagún should be considered the father

of modern anthropology. According to some of his biographers, Sahagún deserves this title because of what they see as his sincere admiration of Nahua culture, wide-ranging interests, and surprisingly modern methods of data collection. In contrast, others have argued that the idea of Sahagún as a “pioneering anthropologist” is both an anachronism and misinterpretation of his work. The fact that scholars and cultural organizations, in spite of clear evidence suggesting other-

wise, continue to repeat the former position engages Victoria Ríos Castaño in her book, *Translation as Conquest: Sahagún and the Universal History of Things of New Spain*. In her detailed study of Sahagún's *Historia universal*, Ríos Castaño seeks to carefully refute the three assumptions underlying the claim that Sahagún was primarily motivated by ethnographical concerns. Highlighting the friar's role in the conversion and colonization of the Nahuatl, Ríos Castaño proposes an alternative label, namely that of "cultural translator."

Translation as Conquest is built around an understanding of cultural translation as a transactional process that considers the work of the translator in relation to his social context and extra-textual constraints. The first two chapters focus on the conditions that influenced Sahagún and the translation processes he oversaw in New Spain between 1558 and 1577. By examining the intellectual trends and texts that were read in the institutions where Sahagún received his education and missionary training, chapter 1 explores cultural presuppositions to which the friar was or could have been exposed before his departure to New Spain. Meanwhile, chapter 2 shifts focus toward the Indies, to discuss the patrons, instructions, audiences, and purposes of *Historia universal*. Expanding on a well-known narrative about the "Spiritual Conquest" of New Spain, the chapter relates Sahagún's translating activities to contemporary debates on the qualities of the indigenous populations, Church leaders' efforts to obtain "weapons" for their conversion, and royal requests for information about them.

After having positioned Sahagún within these intellectual, missionary, and

political contexts, Ríos Castaño concentrates in the remaining three chapters on the various stages of the cultural translation processes involved in the composition of *Historia universal*. Chapter 3 examines the literary sources that Sahagún used to design an initial outline for his encyclopedic work and to rearrange the collected material into its final twelve-book form. Addressing the expectations of both clerical and secular audiences, the chapter presents various classical and medieval encyclopedia and doctrinal texts as well as confession manuals and treatises regarding vices and virtues, serving as possible templates for Sahagún's history. Particularly interesting is her reflection on the specific needs of confessors for recognizing trigger words pointing to specific sins and the influence this necessity had on the writing style of *Historia universal*.

Chapter 4 seeks to undermine the argument that Sahagún's "thorough ethnographic procedure" justifies calling him father of the modern discipline by exploring how inquisitorial techniques informed his methods of enquiry and data collection. Ríos Castaño points out that, in his use of these procedures for ethnographic purposes, Sahagún was preceded by the Franciscan friar Andrés de Olmos, who would thus, as Ríos Castaño points out, deserve the label of father of modern anthropology. Yet, more importantly, she argues that ethnographers and inquisitors share "neither motivation nor purpose or mode of thinking" (p. 154); the former trying to understand a culture, the latter trying to prosecute persons and extirpate non-Christian practices and beliefs. The chapter discusses the role of the friars' experiences with inquisitori-

al trails in familiarizing themselves with its procedures, subsequently considering how this knowledge was applied in developing questionnaires and transforming both verbal and non-verbal information provided by indigenous interviewees into written code.

Finally, chapter 5 focuses on the gathering, comparing, and codifying of data, as well as the composing of the final version of *Historia universal*. Using Patrick Johansson's semiotic triangulation scheme, Ríos Castaño provides a detailed discussion of the different roles that Sahagún's Nahuatl respondents, his Nahuatl assistants, and he himself played in relocation of the source culture into the target text. Themes that are dealt with include the codification of pictorial data, spoken word, and ritual; possibilities for self-censorship or manipulation of what Nahuatl leaders or assistants wanted the Spaniards to know; and Sahagún's efforts to rewrite and rearrange his expanding material into a work that inscribes the Nahuatl world within a Christian framework of Universal History and that could serve as an auxiliary for preachers and confessors.

Translation as Conquest formulates what I take as a convincing argument against understanding Sahagún as the father of modern anthropology. By placing the friar and his work in its proper historical context, the book is able to refute one-by-one the reasons that have been deployed to buttress this idea. Yet, at the same time, Ríos Castaño's efforts to position herself in this specific debate also become one of the book's weaknesses. The author's engagement with a wider field of scholarship on colonial Latin America is limited, leading to conclusions that

reaffirm rather than critically reconsider well-established assumptions about the production of evangelizing works. Illustrative here is the use of the "conquest" metaphor. While the book reveals the complexity of the interactions between Sahagún and his indigenous informants, her conclusions hardly explore the significance of these insights for our understanding of intercultural translation. Sahagún's activities are considered mainly through the narrative of the Spiritual Conquest, and the friar himself is characterized as an "imperialist missionary dedicated to the extermination of the Nahuatl cultural identity" (p. 245). The question of what collaboration and shared interests between the Spanish friar and his indigenous informants means for this notion of conquest remains unasked.

Something similar applies to a second meaning given to the "conquest" metaphor. Ríos Castaño seeks to explain the significance of the *Historia universal* within the apparatus of colonial power and the colonization of the Nahuatl by using the "knowledge–power equation" (p. 241). Recent scholarship on the knowledge culture of the Spanish empire has questioned the imprecise use of this trope. Ríos Castaño falls in the same trap as she provides little empirical evidence on how the friar's translations helped to constitute, outside the immediate context of the convent, people's authority or ability to influence decisions about the colonial and evangelizing project. By addressing Sahagún's position amidst shifting power constellations inside New Spain, across the empire, and beyond, the book could have gained further in explanatory potential.

Ríos Castaño's decision to focus instead on the textual world in which Sahagún operated has nonetheless resulted in an insightful book. *Translation as Conquest* is well-structured and well-written and surely contributes towards deepening our understanding of the *Historia universal*, in particular, and the process of cultural translation in general. Specialists on Sahaguntine scholarship will find new insights in its close readings of translation techniques and intertextual interactions. For laypersons and students – both at the undergraduate and graduate levels – it presents an excellent introduction into this fascinating field of intercultural translation studies.

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Preuss, Ori: *Transnational South America. Experiences, Ideas, and Identities, 1860s-1900s*. London / New York: Routledge 2016. 176 páginas.

La latinoamericanidad es un proyecto en construcción, que se inició con los procesos de formación de las primeras repúblicas en la región y que llega hasta nuestros días. A lo largo de estos más de 200 años se produjeron avances y retrocesos. Ori Preuss, autor de este pequeño estudio, presenta la dimensión que este proceso tuvo por medio de una narrativa situada entre la historia diplomática y de las ideas. Se dedica a una época de particular interés, la cual fue impactada por la independencia de Cuba, una de las últimas posesiones coloniales de España en ultramar, tras la intervención militar de EE. UU. en

1898. Los contemporáneos consideraron este año como clave para el cambio del escenario internacional, marcado por la consolidación de los EE. UU. como nuevo poder hegemónico. Preuss, basándose en textos de literatura, prensa y discursos de políticos y diplomáticos, aporta una visión desde el Cono Sur, puntualmente de Argentina y Brasil, pero sin perder de vista al Uruguay, aunque este tenga un papel menos protagónico.

El trabajo reconstruye cómo, dentro de la región, la circulación de personas y de informaciones aumentó significativamente durante el tiempo en consideración. Este fenómeno se dio en base al creciente interés por conocer los países vecinos y opinar sobre ellos, para, de esta manera, formar un espacio de intercambio de opiniones. Un elemento que llama la atención a Preuss son los textos publicados en portugués en el mundo hispano y en español en el mundo lusoamericano. Preuss enfoca la apropiación del idioma de los vecinos con el concepto analítico de *translation*.

Otro aspecto que el autor pone de relieve es el hecho de que –si bien el mito del Brasil como isla en el continente americano siguió vigente– los viajeros, intelectuales, políticos y diplomáticos intensificaron sus esfuerzos a pensar Sudamérica (y América Latina) como ámbito cultural. Preuss destaca el telégrafo y las líneas marítimas que conectaron Río de Janeiro, Montevideo y Buenos Aires como canales que facilitaron la circulación de información. Cabe señalar que la divulgación de noticias sobre el Cono Sur en los diarios y las revistas vinculó principalmente a las grandes ciudades portuarias, mientras el enorme *hinterland* de las naciones Brasil,