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Article:

Blakesley, J (2016) Examining Modern European poet-translators 'distantly'. *Translation and Literature*, 25 (1). pp. 10-27. ISSN 0968-1361

<https://doi.org/10.3366/tal.2016.0235>

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Examining Modern European Poet-Translators ‘Distantly’

Jacob Blakesley

My aim in this article is to demonstrate translation patterns in and across different European literary fields. Drawing on research by Pierre Bourdieu, Gisèle Sapiro, Johan Heilbron, and centrally Franco Moretti, in the two fields of the sociology of translation and book publishing, I seek to uncover and address some of the contrasts in the way translation is practiced by writers within a select group of four European poetic canons: English (British and Irish), French, Italian, and Spanish. I have chosen these particular traditions because they offer notable contrasts as well as similarities: their interrelationships are profound and widespread. And they provide a test-bed for my methodology, the results having, I hope, the potential to generate hypotheses and ideas for future avenues of macro- and micro-level research.

The sociology of translation came to prominence only around the turn of the twenty-first century. It has shown itself an approach capable of opening new perspectives on several related fields: the question of literary influence; the role of translation in creating new literary genres; the function of translation for poets; and the circulation of what Pierre Bourdieu termed ‘symbolic capital’.¹ Bourdieu expresses what is now the classic sociological view on the rise of the independent writer, unconstrained by patronage and other external forces. Bourdieu sees the ‘invention’ of the writer or artist as the end result of a ‘collective enterprise’ connected with ‘the constitution of an autonomous literary field’ (p. 163); in short, the figure of the modern author, born in the nineteenth century, was established concomitantly with the literary field itself. The literary field is structured around what Bourdieu calls ‘capital’, four types of which he identifies: economic capital (wealth), social capital (personal relationships and networks), cultural capital (education), and symbolic capital (prestige, social honour).²

Bourdieu has little to say about translation, but did write a fundamental essay about publishing, 'A conservative revolution in publishing' (1999), which is particularly relevant for translation scholars. This analysis helps us understand, as Gisèle Sapiro writes, 'not only the flows of translation from one language to another but also the kind of works translated (genres or categories, commercial versus upmarket) according to the economic, political and cultural power relations between countries or linguistic communities'.³ Sapiro is the most prominent exponent of the sociology of literary translation, having written and edited several publications that extend Bourdieu's framework to Translation Studies. In one essay she summarizes the different sociological analyses that the scholar of Translation Studies must carry out:

To understand the act of translating, one should in a first stage analyse it as embedded within the power relations among national states and their languages. These power relations are of three types - political, economic and cultural - the latter split into two aspects: the power relations between linguistic communities as assessed by the number of primary and secondary speakers ... and the symbolic capital accumulated by different countries within the relevant field of cultural production.⁴

This is the reason I will speak about the 'world system' of translations and the 'world system' of languages.

While operating within the framework developed by Bourdieu and Sapiro, I also draw on an approach to world literature developed by Franco Moretti, which he calls 'distant reading'. Moretti calls himself a 'formalist without close reading': as a sociologist of literary forms, he studies 'the great unread' (p. 45),⁵ the '99.5%' of published books that have fallen into oblivion, with the help of quantitative methods and interpretative schema drawn from

evolutionary theory, geography, and so on. I follow Moretti in his use of statistical approaches to world literature within the framework of world-systems theory. Instead of examining individual translations using the methods of close reading, I shall be investigating national and international translation trends using statistics. I will show which European poets translated the most and from which languages, as well as significant differences in translation trends between different languages. This will go some way to answering questions such as: What does it mean that waves of translations occur between specific source and target languages? When do these take place? What is the literary, historical, political, and editorial context for them? How do these contexts change over time?

In the world system, translations are unevenly distributed, in terms of source languages and target languages as well as genre. Sapiro comments that this is not a ‘mechanical reflection’ of the book production of various countries, but naturally ‘also depends on cultural and political factors’.⁶ The relative weights of national literatures depend on their symbolic capital, on how many canonized classics they have, as Pascale Casanova observes: ‘Age is one of the chief aspects of literary capital: the older the literature, the more substantial a country’s patrimony, the more numerous the canonical texts that constitute its literary pantheon in the form of “national classics”’.⁷ The weight of symbolic capital has changed over time, so that where French was once the leading source language, dominant in literature roughly until World War II, it has now lost its place to English. Likewise, while Russian was a source language for many translations worldwide during the Cold War, it drastically declined in importance after the fall of the Soviet Union, although Russian fiction is appearing more often in English translation today.

The linguist Abram de Swaan developed what he termed ‘the global language system’, situating the world’s 7,000 languages within a hierarchy.⁸ This has been applied to the world system of translations. Borrowing Swann’s four levels, Johan Heilbron has

categorized all languages as either hyper-central, central, semi-central, or peripheral, ranging from the most hegemonic to the least hegemonic. This classification is not static, but is a ‘dynamic constellation’: ‘central languages can lose their centrality, peripheral languages can progress in the international ranking’.⁹ Heilbron classifies them according to the number of translations they gave rise to, basing his analysis partly on the international and unreliable Index Translationum (see below). I would correct his analysis, making it more general: English, the ‘hyper-central’ language, is at the overall numerical summit, although with variable figures depending on the target languages. We do not know the exact figures, because there are no reliable global statistics,¹⁰ but English ‘has a clearly hegemonic position in cross-cultural communications’.¹¹ It is rare to find a South American or European country which does not have English as the dominant source language for published translations – it is certainly the case for France, Italy, and Spain, which are the foci of the present study. Of course, in other parts of the world, there is a smaller percentage of translations from English, as in East Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Following English nowadays are the two languages with what Heilbron and Sapiro call a ‘central’ position: French and German. Behind these two categories are a handful of ‘semi-central’ languages such as Italian, Russian, and Spanish. Lastly, there are all the rest of the world’s languages (with different symbolic capitals), lumped together in a peripheral position, from Arabic and Chinese to Welsh and Wajarri. So, based on translation rates, English, French, Italian, and Spanish have unequal degrees of centrality across the world. And their centrality is affected by geography and local context. In some countries, such as in the Middle East and East Asia, peripheral languages such as Arabic and Chinese will have more standing than in the rest of the world, to the detriment of English.

There is what has been called an ‘inverse relationship’ between the centrality of a language and the number of translations made into it. So, the more central a language – such

as English – the fewer translations are published in it. However, as Pym and Chrupala remind us, highlighting the diversity of postcolonial writing in English, ‘the sheer size of English could mean that much of the diversity and new blood that other language groups seek through translation, English-language cultures may be receiving without translation’.¹² Nevertheless, as we shall see when comparing the four national traditions, the overall picture is less one of hegemonic English and more one of variation.

My corpus covers the translations of poet-translators, obviously only a very small proportion of all translators, and so numerically far more manageable. Most of the reasons why poet-translators make an interesting category for my purposes will emerge, but I would stress here that in terms of publishing one is dealing with a modern phenomenon. My corpus shows that translations by poet-translators dramatically increased in quantity over the twentieth century, as the growth of national and international book markets offered modern poets commercial incentives to translate. At times, to be sure, there is a fine line between a poet who translates (included in the corpus) and a translator who composes poetry (not included, if the translator does not appear in the representative anthology or anthologies which form the basis of the analysis). We can think for example of a poet such as W. H. Auden. He published fifteen translations from seven languages, from poetry and opera libretti to drama, personal memoir, and narrative, from Ancient Greek, Croatian, French, German, Icelandic, Italian, and Swedish. And he features, of course, in our corpus. On the other hand, there are plenty of translators who may compose original verse but who are much more recognized for their translations. For our purposes, the fundamental distinguishing characteristic is that of canonization through anthologization. If a writer has been anthologized in one of the chosen poetry anthologies (see below), then he or she is deemed to be a poet-translator, even if such a figure has published more translations than books of original verse. The poet-translator is not a mere derivative imitator: one reason the study of

poet-translators is so fascinating is that their translations sometimes acquire an autonomous life of their own. We can think of Yves Bonnefoy's *Le Roi Lear*, Seamus Heaney's recasting of *Beowulf*, Juan Ramón Jiménez's celebrated versions of Tagore's poetry, or Salvatore Quasimodo's *Lirici greci*.

* * *

There is unfortunately no reliable comparative data on the contemporary publication of translations. Literary scholars rarely incorporate such statistics in their work – or else they, like many Translation Studies scholars, rely on the figures of the UNESCO Index Translationum, which, as already noted, are often erroneous. The Index, begun in 1932 and online since 1979, leaves much to be desired in inclusiveness. For translations published in Greece, Italy, Norway, Poland, and Spain error rates are anywhere from 14% to 82%; translations published in Spain during this period are under-reported by 53% and in Italy by 82%.¹³ In short, the statistics available from national governments are much more reliable than those of the Index Translationum.

Despite the flourishing of Translation Studies as a discipline, there has been little research in comparative assessments of modern European poet-translators, and none at all from a quantitative perspective. Gathering statistics about translations by poets is a real necessity in order to situate the translations themselves within their proper context: their poetics, the poetics of the time, the historical period and political situation, and economic stability. Without adopting a quantitative perspective, we can't see the wood for the trees: we cannot see the larger picture and its patterns. As Anthony Pym remarks, 'the history of one translation is inseparable from the history of the numerous translations that contributed to its setting. This means that research must at some stage seek information on properly translational contexts. It must ask what translations were generally carried out, when, where,

by whom and with what frequency.¹⁴

In my study, the statistical evidence to support arguments about the influence of specific literatures and poetics on other national literatures and poetics was gathered through bibliographic research based on national and international library catalogues and databases. No pre-existing body of statistical data was available, owing to the lack of comparative figures, the unreliability of records (UNESCO), and the absence of systemized collecting activity.¹⁵ But these lacunae reflect a wider problem with the status of translated works. It is readily apparent how often monographs devoted to poets fail to discuss their translations, and normally cite few or none of them in their bibliographies, as in the case of those devoted to three of the most prolific poet-translators by language in the present study: Juan Eduardo Cirlot, Edwin Muir, and Piero Jahier.¹⁶ Even reference books dealing with translators fail to provide comprehensive information. The valiant effort of Henri Van Hoof in his *Dictionnaire universel des traducteurs*, collected over more than thirty years, is characterized by omissions and lack of detail.¹⁷ Of the ten most prolific European poet-translators with whom I am concerned, this volume cites only three.¹⁸ The reader would have no way of knowing from Valverde's entry ('A traduit de l'anglais: Ulysses [1977] de James Joyce (1882-1942), etc.') that the Spanish poet-translator translated 101 books.

The data gathered for this study comes from several sources: the catalogues of the national libraries of France, Italy, Spain, England and Ireland; worldcat.org; and Google Books. I do not aim to give a comprehensive overview of pan-European translation trends, but rather to offer new data and analysis for a number of issues. It is important to note that the poet-translators examined often did not restrict themselves to the translation of poetry but ventured into fiction and theatre translation as well. As Sapiro points out, 'variations between different categories of books are an indicator of the relative autonomy of cultural fields'.¹⁹ So, as we will see, translation rates for a specific target language in different genres change

depending on the ‘autonomy’ of the respective literary field. If, as Lawrence Venuti hypothesizes, ‘today poetry may well be the least translated genre’,²⁰ we will see whether this holds true for translations carried out by modern poets themselves.

In order to establish a corpus of canonical modern poet-translators, I have aimed to choose a ‘selective canon’ of poets belonging to each linguistic tradition. So, I have chosen one, or in some cases two, comprehensive anthologies of English, French, Italian, and Spanish poetry in the originals:

Anthology of Twentieth-Century British and Irish Poetry, edited by Keith Tuma
(Oxford, 2001)

Antología de la poesía española del Siglo XX (1900-1980), edited by J. P. Ayuso, 2 vols (Madrid, 2003)

Poesía española reciente, 1980-2000, edited by Juan Cano Ballesta (Madrid, 2002).

Antologia della poesia italiana. Novecento, edited by Cesare Segre and Carlo Ossola
(Turin, 2003)

Poesia italiana del Novecento, edited by Ermanno Krumm and Tiziano Rossi (Milan, 1995)

Anthologie de la poésie française du XXe siècle, Vol. 1, edited by Michel Decaudin
(Paris, 2000)

Anthologie de la poésie française du XXe siècle, Vol. 2, edited by Jean-Baptiste Para
(Paris, 2000)

I chose anthologies published from 1995 onwards, which were not sectorial, thematic, or regional, but rather ‘chronological,’ in Niccolò Scaffai’s classification,²¹ and included over fifty poets apiece. The advantage of this approach is above all methodological. These

anthologies have sold well enough to be still in print ten or twenty years later. They are frequently mentioned in critical publications and studied in university courses. The biggest drawback is that neither the number of poets, nor the number of poet-translators, is constant. I circumvent this by concentrating on percentages and not numerical figures.

My four datasets include between 101 and 268 poets apiece, almost all of them born between 1860 and 1970, belonging to the four languages and literary canons already specified: English, French, Italian, and Spanish. There is no one-to-one identity between language and nationality. Numerous poets who are born in one country (e.g. Spain) emigrate when young to another country (e.g. Mexico) and can often be regarded as being of either nationality (Spanish or Mexican), depending on how they are fitted into their respective anthologies and canons. Here too arises the issue of poets operating within postcolonial settings: francophone poets who have no link with France, or English-language poets with no link to Britain and Ireland. My practice has been to include all anthologized poets regardless of their country of origin: after all, what we are speaking about here is the ‘selective canon’ by language, and it would be inappropriate to exclude poets on account of an a priori restriction about nationality. As the statistics in the most recent *Ethnologue* report show, English is a national language (either ‘statutory national language’ or ‘de facto national language’) in 57 countries, with 335 million native speakers worldwide. French is a national language in 29 countries, with 75 million native speakers across the globe. Italian is a national language in 4 countries, with 63 million native speakers. Spanish is spoken in 20 countries, with 414 million native speakers.

A few final methodological notes. The focus is on the comparison of translated books or book-length works; a book in two volumes is considered two translations. First editions are counted, but not subsequent ones; print runs are not usually known, so are ignored. Only sole translations or translations carried out with one other collaborator are counted; books with

three or more translators are not considered, since the focus is on the primacy of translation authorship.²² I do not include poems published in journals, little magazines, or anthologies; while this means that the overall picture cannot therefore be fully comprehensive, it does allow concentration on substantive publications as discrete objects of study. Some book-length translations will have eluded me because they were published by small presses and did not make their way to national libraries.

* * *

In the four traditions studied, the overall production of translations by poet-translators can be looked at in terms of how many of the writers included in the corpus published one or more book-length translations. This is shown in Figure 1. The language with the highest

<Take in Figure 1 asap>

<i>Poets' writing language</i>	% Poets translating at least one volume
Italian	70
Spanish	59
French	47
English	39

Figure 1. Percentage of poets in corpus who translated at least one volume

percentage of anthologized modern poets who translated at least one book-length work is Italian. Spanish came next, with a majority of the poets in the dataset having carried out translations, followed distantly by French, while the English-language poets were least likely to translate a volume, only 39% having done so over the period. This of course suggests how

much more translation is carried out by poets in ‘semi-central’ countries such as Italy and Spain. Further analysis would show that minority language communities generally translate more often than hegemonic language communities.

The next question is how much these poets translated. Notwithstanding the differences in translation rates, Spanish poets published by far the most book-length translations. On average, Spanish poet-translators each published 14 volumes of translations. Next came Italian and French poets, who averaged 8 volumes of translations each, and last were English language poet-translators with about 7 translations. These results are reflected in Figure 2, a list of the top ten most prolific poet-translators appearing in my data. Thus, <Take in Fig. 2 asap>

Nationality	Poet-translator	Published translations
Spanish	Juan Eduardo Cirlot	126
Spanish	Clara Janés	119
Spanish	José María Valverde	101
Spanish	Federico Patán	66
French	Armel Guerne	64
French	Philippe Jaccottet	58
Spanish	Ernestina de Champourcín	47
Spanish	Ángel Crespo	46
Spanish	Nuria Parés	46
Spanish	Tomás Segovia	46

Figure 2. Most prolific poet-translators from all traditions

eight of the most prolific poet-translators are Spanish, with only two French poets rounding out the list, and no English language or Italian poets present. This list of poet-translators is idiosyncratic, in that it does not correspond with received poetic canons and in that these are not the most influential poets. There is Cirlot instead of Lorca; Janés instead of Miguel Hernández; Patán instead of Rafael Alberti; Champourcín instead of Antonio (and Manuel) Machado; Crespo instead of Luis Cernuda; Parés instead of Jorge Guillén; Segovia instead of Juan Ramón Jiménez. Likewise, Guerne is a well-known translator in France, but not so recognized as a poet; while Jaccottet is the only poet of these ten to fit firmly into a modern poetic canon. In short, this suggests that the most prominent poets tend not to be those who translate the most.

Although Spanish poets translated more by far than poets from other traditions, when we look at their overall translation output (Figure 3) we see that they published far smaller <Take in Fig. 3 asap>

Poet-translator nationality	% Poetry translations
English	49
French	46
Italian	37
Spanish	27

Figure 3. Percentage of translations which were poetry translations

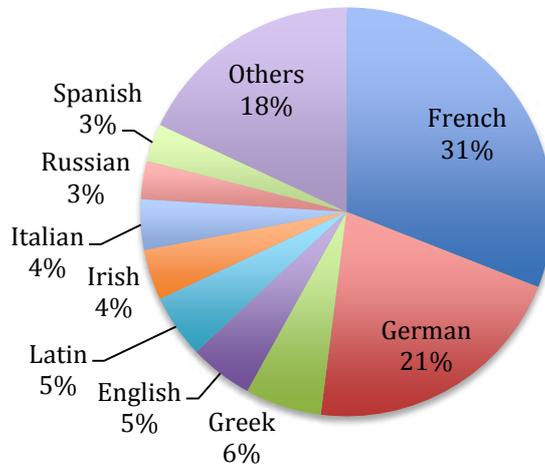
percentages of poetry translations than their international peers. So, none of Juan Eduardo

Cirlot's 126 translations were of poetry; the vast majority were of art history. And José María Valverde translated 91 works of fiction, theatre (21 works by Shakespeare), theology (19 works by Romano Guardini), and others, but only 10 volumes of poetry. Federico Patán produced 66 translations, many of them dealing with aspects of psychology and psychiatry, only one of which (*Poesía norteamericana del siglo XX: breve antología*) was of poetry proper. English poets in the corpus published almost twice as much translated poetry as Spanish poets, as a percentage of their translation work, with the French close behind and the Italians in between.

Now that we have the raw numbers about who translates the most, we can move to interesting questions about translation currents to and from each national literature, as seen in the translations carried out by poet-translators. The competition here is largely between the source languages of English and French. Historically speaking, until World War II, French was the prestigious language of culture, as Pascale Casanova has shown.²³ Yet, owing to the shifts in political power and symbolic capital, English overtook French after the War, largely because of the economic and military power of the United States. In the following section, we shall see how this balance is reflected in translations by our European poets, through looking at statistics over three genres – poetry, fiction, and theatre – along with total figures.

English-speaking poets translated the most books from French (102), followed by German (70), and then other languages far behind.

% of total translations into English by source language



This varied by epoch: between the Wars, there were 17 translations from French, but 30 translations from German. The latter were almost all carried out by Edwin and Wilma Muir, prolific translators of German fiction, exceptions including W. H. Auden and Robert Graves.

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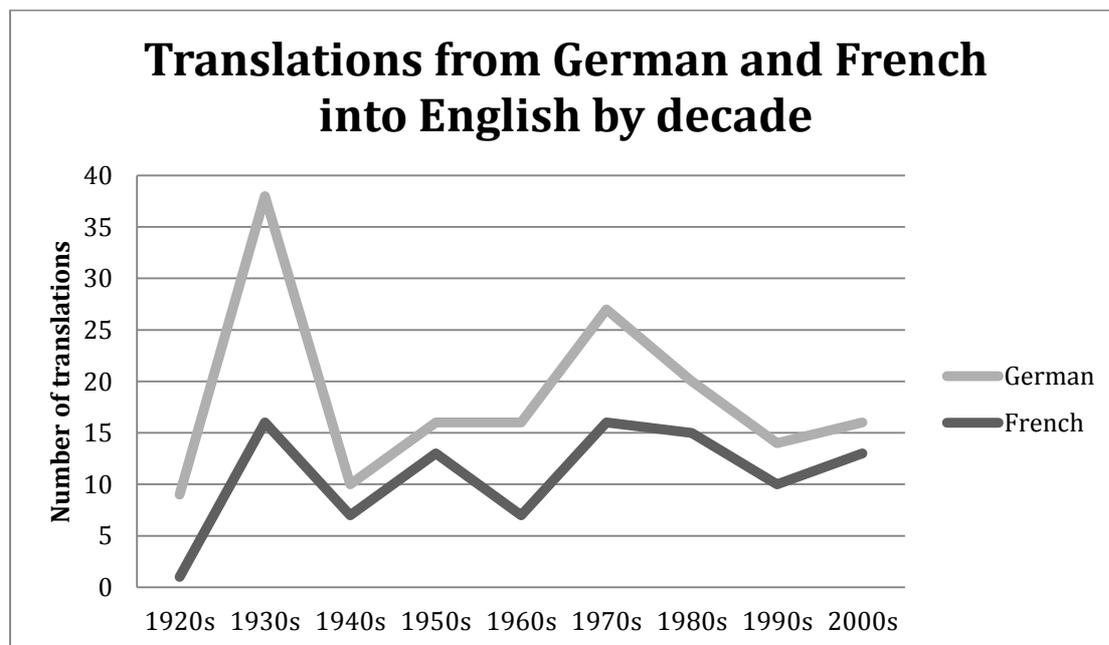


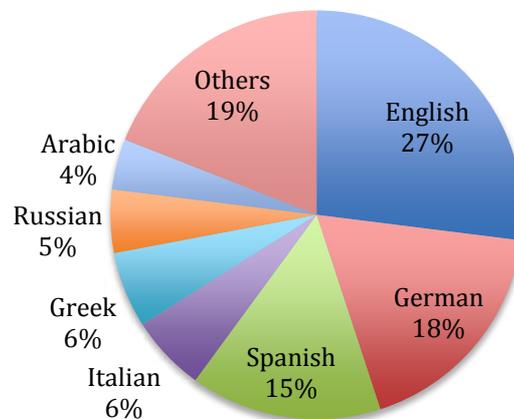
Figure 4. Translations published in English from French and German

There would then be a sharp drop, lasting from shortly after Britain's entrance into World War II in 1939 until 1948, during which time no German titles were translated. This was followed by an upturn in the 1960s and 1970s, and then a gradual falling off. French, on the other hand, would experience a much more consistent record throughout the entire post-Second World War era.

Yet linguistic and literary dominance over the twentieth century varies by genre. For instance, in terms of fiction translated by English-language poets, German greatly overshadowed French, making up 48% as compared to 30% of the fiction translations. This was owing to the numerous English translations of Franz Kafka (7 translations), Lion Feuchtwanger (7), Gert Hofmann (4), Robert Walser (4), and the Brothers Grimm (4). Such canonical French novelists as Balzac, Flaubert, Stendhal, Proust, and Sartre were simply not translated by English poets, although other English translators did tackle them. If instead we focus solely on poetry, it is clear that English poets translated much more from French than from German (27% to 8%): so, Tristan Tzara (6 volumes translated), Saint-John Perse (4), Mallarmé (4), and Pierre Jean Jouve (3). In terms of theatre translations, there were as many from ancient Greek (32%), especially Sophocles (6), Euripides (5), and Aeschylus (3), as from French, with Molière (6) and Racine (4) in primis.

If we turn now to French poet-translators, we find that they translated, on average, more titles (of any genre) from English (27%) than any other language, with German (18%) and Spanish (15%) in second and third places.

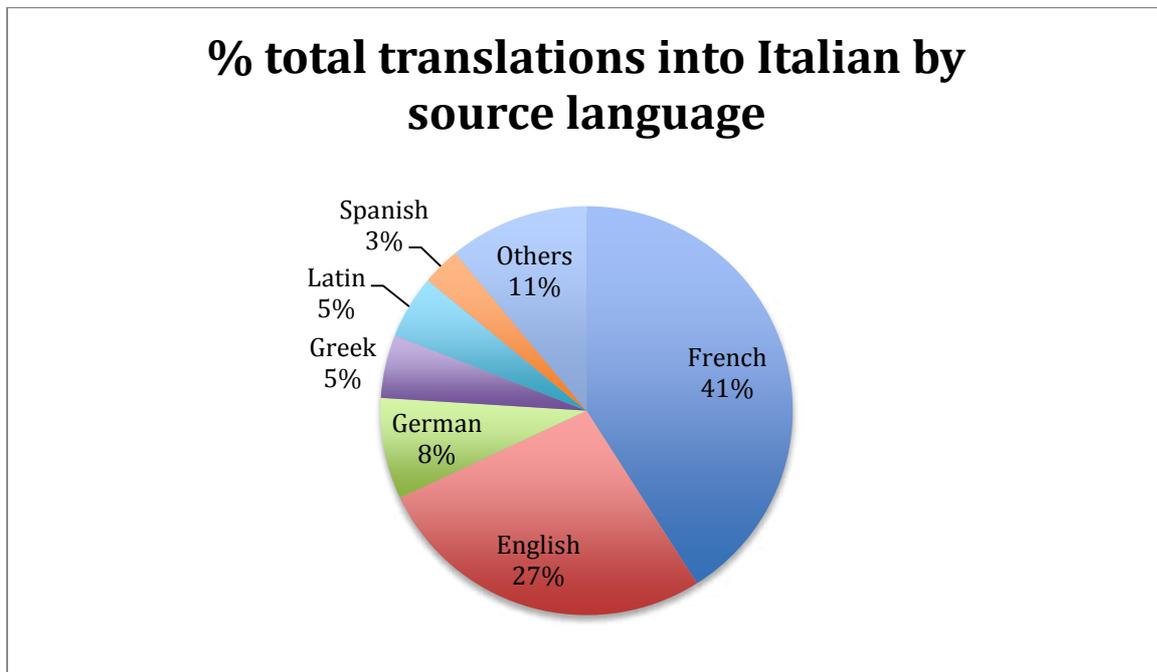
% total translations into French by source language



Yet these percentages hide a crucial fact, which can only be seen if we examine these figures by literary genre. English as a source language dominated translated fiction into French: 38% of the total compared to German at 24%. So, there are plentiful translations by French poet-translators of Lawrence Durrell (16), William Burroughs (9), Melville (6), and Henry Miller (6), and a large German component here as well – Musil (15), Christa Wolf (9), von Kleist (8), Braun (8), and Jünger (7). The English dominance is even stronger for theatre translations into French, where English is the source language for more than 50% of all translations. This is thanks to the overwhelming presence of Shakespeare, who accounts for 27 theatre translations into French. Yet, when we turn to the genre of poetry, things are different. Here, the most popular source language is Spanish, at 25%, with a quarter more items than from English (18%). There could be several reasons for this, such as the strong links between Spanish and French surrealist poetry. There are numerous French translations of poetry by José Ángel Valente (16), Paz (12), Lorca (8), Antonio Gamoneda (7), Roberto Juarroz (7), and Neruda (4).

For Italian poets, French was the most important source for all literary genres, from poetry (38% from French, with second-place English far behind at 17%), through fiction

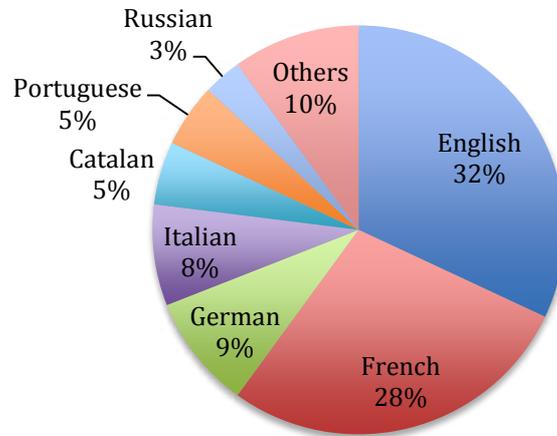
(French at 45% to English at 34%) and theatre (French at 35%; ancient Greek in second place at 29%).



Overall, Italian poets translated 41% of their sources from French, substantially more than they translated from English (at 27%). Italians translated symbolist and twentieth-century French poetry in earnest: Apollinaire (8 volumes), Baudelaire (6), Mallarmé (6), Prévert (5), Verlaine (5), Char (4), Rimbaud (4), Valéry (4), Éluard (3), and Frénaud (3). In fiction, they preferred the nineteenth-century novels of Flaubert (9), Stendhal (6), and Balzac (5), and the twentieth-century writers Proust (8), Julien Green (5), and Bataille (4). In terms of theatre, they most frequently translated Shakespeare (11), Euripides (7), Aeschylus (6), and Molière (6), Sophocles (5), Brecht (3), and Racine (3). A concentration of translations from few languages is in evidence here: French and English account for 68% of all of the Italian poets' translations.

Among translations by Spanish poet-translators, English is slightly ahead of French as a source language, accounting for 32% as against 28% of all translations.

% total translations into Spanish by source language



However, French tops English in the realm of poetry, 20% to 15%, especially represented in symbolist poetry: Verlaine (8), Baudelaire (6), Rimbaud (5), Valéry (5), Mallarmé (2). Here there is also a significant number of translations from Catalan (e.g. Pere Gimferrer, with 7 translated volumes) and Portuguese (e.g. Pessoa, with 7 as well), each accounting for 10% of all poetry translations into Spanish. Meanwhile, slightly more French fiction is translated than English (33% to 30%), with stalwarts such as Proust (6), Stendhal (6), Beckett (4), and Duras (4). Yet the most translated fiction writer is the nineteenth-century Portuguese novelist Eça de Queirós, with 8 books translated. On the other hand, when it comes to theatre, English (56%), represented mostly by Shakespeare (28) and Oscar Wilde (3), is much more translated than French drama (14%), principally visible in Luis Cernuda's three-volume translation of Prosper Mérimée's plays.

On the whole, French poets drew on a much larger number of source languages than their international peers: 39 different languages, ranging from Arabic and Hungarian to Persian and Yiddish. English poets translated from 29 languages, Spanish poets from 26, and Italian poets from 21. External factors must be significant for these figures. Translations from minority and peripheral languages may form a base for a new publishing house, as Sapiro has

shown.²⁴ From a sectorial perspective, since poetry translations are often less anchored to market realities, with their losses often covered by sales of popular fiction, there is more freedom in commissioning translations from lesser-read languages. And we must not forget that large immigrant communities around Europe produced some well-known poets who translated from more peripheral languages, such as Arabic.

Finally, I will consider the symbolic capital of foreign writers in different national traditions. I will look at this from two different vantage points: the most translated authors overall in our corpus, and the most consistently and widely translated authors into the four languages of our corpus.

Figure 5 shows the most translated authors (both poets and non-poets), calculated as those who were translated five or more times. The most translated authors in our corpus were <Take in Figure 5 asap>

Source language	Authors	Translations	% total translations
French	21 ²⁵	213	24%
English	20	238	27%
German	17	197	22%
Spanish	7	71	8%
Greek	5	61	7%
Italian	3	23	3%
Russian	3	22	2%
Portuguese	2	20	2%
Czech	1	11	1%
Latin	1	11	1%
Bengali	1	8	1%

Catalan	1	7	1%
Hungarian	1	7	1%
Arabic	1	6	1%
Total	84	895	

Figure 5. Classification by source language of all authors translated five or more times in corpus

English, German, and French: they account for nearly three out of every four translations. The next closest language, Spanish, has fewer than half that number. As confirmed previously, there is no overpowering hegemony of English here. In fact, there are more French authors (21) than English. Moreover, the English total is much exaggerated by the popularity of Shakespeare and his 80 translations. While the median number of translated volumes of French and German authors in our corpus is 10 apiece, the median number of translations of English authors is only 8. The symbolic capital possessed by French, German, and English writers, however, is unsurpassed by those writing in other languages. Yet the level of prestige varies by original author. These 84 authors were not translated evenly across our corpus – some were translated primarily or solely by one nationality of poet-translator, such as Musil (translated only by French poets), Flaubert (translated only by Italian poets), and Romano Guardini (translated only by one Spanish poet), while others were translated in abundance by all four nationalities.

To show this in depth, I have constructed a repertoire of widely translated authors – by French, Italian, Spanish, and UK/Irish poet-translators. Figure 6 shows there were sixteen
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Author	Total translations	FRE	ITA	SPA	UK/IRE
Shakespeare	80	36	15	29	N/A
Rilke	28	15	1	11	1
Bible	24	17	2	4	1
Hölderlin	16	8	1	4	3
Proust	16	N/A	8	6	2
Sophocles	16	4	5	1	6
Aeschylus	15	4	6	2	3
Molière	15	N/A	7	2	6
Goethe	13	2	6	2	3
Char	12	N/A	4	7	1
Mallarmé	12	N/A	6	2	4
Melville	11	6	3	2	N/A
Virgil	11	2	4	3	2
Brothers Grimm	10	3	1	2	4
Rimbaud	10	N/A	4	5	1
Valéry	10	N/A	4	5	1

Figure 6. Most frequently translated authors in corpus

such authors (including the Bible), translated at least ten times, who appeared in all the ‘major’ languages of our survey. Shakespeare reigns over all, as is clear, and one poet – José María Valverde – translated his entire corpus of plays (interestingly, into prose). Rilke is the second most translated, although he is far more popular among French and Spanish poets than Italian and English poets. The Bible is surprisingly in third place, owing to the numerous

translations of various biblical books by two French poets, Jean Grosjean (who also translated the Quran) and Henri Meschonnic (also well-known for his writings on translation). One notes that there are no Italian or Spanish authors in this list. While the most translated Italian and Spanish writers, respectively, were Carlo Cassola (10) and José Ángel Valente (16)/Octavio Paz (15), none was translated by poets belonging to all the other three literary traditions. Instead, such authors happened to be translated by non-poets.

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Isolated studies of poet-translators do not provide an overall context in which to situate their work. This study has gone some way to providing that context. We have seen that Italian, French, and Spanish poets consistently translated more than English poets – from the beginning to the end of the twentieth century, and that translation trends differed in many respects from one language to another. The hegemonic role of English, developing throughout the century, does not, however, dominate the whole corpus of translations. We might remember how Italian and Spanish poets, such as Giorgio Caproni and Jorge Guillén, translated more poetry from French than English, and how French poets, such as Jacques Ancet and Guy Levis Mano, translated more poetry from Spanish than English. The same trend is clear in the most-translated authors: only one of the ten is English, but he (Shakespeare) is dominant. Likewise, only a quarter of the most widely translated authors are English, slightly less than the corresponding percentage of French authors. Even fiction is ‘colonized’ by French sources more than by English, at least in translations by Spanish and Italian poet-translators. Moreover, German is widely translated by English- and French-language poets (such as Edwin Muir and Philippe Jaccottet), and Greek and Latin by Italian and English language poets (such as Salvatore Quasimodo and C. H. Sisson). While further research on poet-translators within other languages (e.g. German, Portuguese) might offer different results for a specific tradition, it would not change the relative statistics among the

four traditions I have chosen. These statistics make it possible to respond to Venuti's claim (above) that poetry is the least translated of genres. For translations made by poets, at least, this is not the case. Overall, 40% of all titles in our corpus are poetry translations, while only 27% are fiction titles, and 10% plays. But no doubt it is unsurprising that poetry is what poets often choose to translate.

Now that these figures are to hand, I hope we may see further study of national and international translation networks, and further analysis of the connections between poets and translators of different countries. We need to investigate how national literatures change in tandem with translation trends and flows, through analysing the operation of publishing houses and their lists, and the circulation of 'symbolic capital'. Moreover, such work needs to be situated chronologically, so that we can study trends over time. My analysis has, of course, used a 'distant' or statistical approach, but has suggested further lines of inquiry relating to the function of translation for poets and the spread of literary influence across genres and languages. As Bourdieu recommended, what is needed is both a micro- and a macro-analysis: both internal and external analyses simultaneously. In this sense, the use of statistical analysis and close reading can complement each other, and together fill a current gap in research on modern poet-translators.

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¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, edited by Randal Johnson (Cambridge, 1993), p. 75.

² Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979; reprint London, 2013), p. 108.

³ Gisèle Sapiro, 'Translation and the field of publishing: A commentary on Pierre Bourdieu's "A conservative revolution in publishing"', *Translation Studies*, 1 (2008), 154-66 (p. 163).

⁴ Johan Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro, 'Outline for a sociology of translation', in *Constructing a Sociology of Translation*, edited by Michaela Wolf and Alexandra Fukari (Amsterdam, 2007), pp. 93-107 (p. 95).

⁵ Franco Moretti, *Distant Reading* (London, 2013), p. 45.

⁶ Gisèle Sapiro, 'Editorial Policy and Translation', in *Handbook of Translation Studies*, edited by Yves Gambier and Luc van Doorslaer, 4 vols (Amsterdam, 2012), III, 32-8 (p. 34).

⁷ Pascale Casanova, *World Republic of Letters*, translated by M. B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, 2004), p. 14.

⁸ Abram de Swaan, *Words of the World: The Global Language System* (Malden, MA, 2001), pp. 1-6.

⁹ Johan Heilbron, 'Le système mondial des traductions', in *Les contradictions de la globalisation éditoriale*, edited by Gisèle Sapiro (Paris, 2009), pp. 253-75 (p. 263); my translation.

¹⁰ The Index Translationum records 2,315,210 translations over the years 1979-2013, of which 55% were translations from English, but for its unreliability see below.

¹¹ Anthony Pym and Grzegorz Chrupala, 'The quantitative analysis of translation flows in the age of an international language', in *Less Translated Languages*, edited by Albert Branchadell and Lovell Margaret West (Amsterdam, 2005), pp. 27-38 (p. 28).

¹² Pym and Chrupala, 'Quantitative analysis', p. 37.

¹³ Italy's official statistics office reports that there were 294,588 translations into Italian from 1979-2007; UNESCO's Index Translationum reports only 52,990 over the same period. Spain's official statistics office reports that there were 281,637 translations into Spanish from 1990-2007; UNESCO's Index Translationum reports only 148,999. See *Annuario di statistiche culturali* (Rome, 1954-2008); Ministerio de Cultura, *La traducción editorial en España* (Madrid, 2010), p. 9; and <http://www.unesco.org/xtrans> (accessed 1 December 2014).

¹⁴ Anthony Pym, 'Catalogues and Corpora in Translation History', in *The Knowledges of the Translator: From Literary Interpretation to Machine Translation*, edited by Malcolm Coulthard and Pat Odber de Baubeta (Lewiston, PA, 1996), pp. 167-90.

¹⁵ The best effort in this direction has been Gisèle Sapiro's work as author and editor: her volume *Translatio* is certainly pioneering, although problematized by the use of the *Index Translationum* statistics.

¹⁶ José Luis Corazón Ardura, *La escalera da a la nada. Estética de Juan Eduardo Cirlot* (Mursia, 2007); Armel Guerne: *Entre le verbe et la foudre*, edited by Philippe Blanc (Charleville-Mézières, 2001); Margery McCulloch, *Edwin Muir: Poet, Critic and Novelist* (Edinburgh, 1993); and Alberto Giordano, *Invito alla lettura di Piero Jahier* (Milan: 1973).

¹⁷ Henri Van Hoof, *Dictionnaire universel des traducteurs* (Geneva, 1993).

¹⁸ José María Valverde (p. 380), Armel Guerne (p. 152), and Philippe Jaccottet (p. 183). While the entries for Guerne and Jaccottet go into more specifics, there is no attempt at comprehensiveness.

¹⁹ Sapiro, 'Editorial Policy and translation', p. 34.

²⁰ Lawrence Venuti, 'Introduction: Poetry and Translation', *Translation Studies*, 4 (2011), 127-32 (p. 127).

²¹ Niccolò Scaffai, 'Altri canzonieri. Sulle antologie della poesia italiana (1903-2005)', *Paragrafo 1* (2006), 75-98 (p. 91).

²² It should be clear that I am not calculating the total number of translations per poet in the broad sense of poems translated, dramas translated, stories translated, etc. I am counting the total number of translations published in book form, which is of course different.

²³ Pascale Casanova, *La république mondiale des lettres* (Paris, 1999).

²⁴ Sapiro, 'Translation and the field of publishing', p. 157.

²⁵ I have counted Beckett twice: first as a French author accounting for nineteen translations into English; and second, as an English author accounting for eleven translations into French.