

**Borja Albi, A., & Prieto Ramos, F. (2013). *Legal translation in context: Professional issues and prospects*. Bern: Peter Lang. 315 p.**

*Legal Translation in Context* is a valuable addition to the growing body of literature on legal translation. It focuses not on theoretical or linguistic considerations but, as the subheading indicates, on professional issues and prospects. These include recruitment, training, status, accreditation and certification procedures, quality control and ethical matters. Similar works tend to concentrate on translation in bilingual countries or in international organizations, a notable example being the authoritative work by Šarčević (1997). *Legal Translation in Context* adopts a broader perspective, devoting considerable space to ‘bread and butter’ tasks performed by freelancers working for private companies or for individuals.

This hands-on approach is reflected in the structure of the work, which is organized on the basis of professional context. It deals with legal translation in three main areas: the private sector (Part 1), national public institutions such as the courts and police services (Part 2), and international organizations such as the European Union and the United Nations (Part 3).

In so doing, the authors implicitly extend the scope of legal translation from the traditional category of legally binding documents (e.g., statutes, judgments and contracts) to all texts which are part of the legal process (ranging from court orders to forensic reports, witness statements and even personal correspondence, in the case of criminal proceedings). Several writers stress the wide variety of topics and text types involved in legal translation (pp. 104, 135–137, 204, 231–232), which sets it apart from other types of special-purpose translation. This redefinition of legal translation is significant on both a theoretical and a practical level since it gives legitimacy to subject areas which were previously considered out of bounds by authors on the topic.<sup>1</sup>

The range of countries covered is wide, spanning Europe, North and South America, and a number of supranational organizations. The reader may be surprised by the number of articles dealing with Spain, which is attributable to the nationality of the editors. However, this can be viewed as counterpoint to the traditional bias in such works towards bilingual or multilingual countries such as Canada and, to a lesser extent, Belgium and Switzerland.

The emphasis throughout is resolutely practical. For instance, Chapter 3 contains much useful information and advice for freelance translators specializing in commercial and in corporate law (including the sensitive issue of relations with clients) and is required reading for anyone intending to work in this area. Similarly, the description of recruitment and on-the-job training at the EU (Chapter 9), the UN

(Chapter 10) and the WTO (Chapter 13), as well as detailed accounts of the daily work of translators at the International Criminal Court (Chapter 11) and INTERPOL (Chapter 12), will be of considerable interest to prospective applicants to these organizations.

More generally, this work takes stock of the current state of the translation market, with several authors mentioning pressures on freelance translators resulting from outsourcing and the increasingly dominant role played by translation agencies (pp. 83, 101). It is refreshing to find such down-to-earth issues dealt with in an academic volume.

Most of the authors are practising translators and some, including the co-editors, are scholar-practitioners. Several names, such as Deborah Cao, Jean-Claude G emar and Susan  ar evi , will be familiar to students of legal translation.

It is perhaps churlish to find fault with such a fine volume, but one grouch is that the reader has to wait until the end of the book for a detailed account of computer-assisted translation (CAT), dealt with in Chapter 14 in the context of an international organization with a dedicated support team. True, CAT is touched upon earlier in the book (pp. 70–71), with a reference to a more detailed article in another source. However, it would have been useful to add a separate chapter on the tools available to the freelancer who does not have the benefit of an IT support team, together with an assessment of the usefulness of such tools for legal translators.<sup>2</sup> Another regret is that, with a few exceptions, the authors fail to give concrete examples of the translation difficulties mentioned, instead emphasizing in-house protocol and procedures regarding translation.<sup>3</sup>

However, these are minor blemishes. Overall, *Legal Translation in Context* is a comprehensive, informative and highly readable survey of current practice in all areas of legal translation. It can be readily recommended to students, trainers and practitioners.

## References

- Bocquet, C. (2008). *La traduction juridique: Fondement et m thode*. Brussels: De Boeck.
-  ar evi , S. (1997). *New approach to legal translation*. The Hague: Kluwer Law International.

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- 1 For instance, Bocquet (2008) restricts the scope of legal translation to documents which create legal norms (e.g., statutes and contracts), apply these norms (rulings) or describe them (academic writing).
  - 2 A footnote on page 106 alludes to a project which aims to build a multilingual electronic corpus for use by legal translators, conducted at Castellón University and coordinated by co-editor Borja Albi. This and similar initiatives would undoubtedly have merited more detailed coverage.
  - 3 The most notable exception is Chapter 12, which contains a discussion of the policy at INTERPOL regarding culture-bound terms, and a bilingual glossary with suggested translations of frequently used terms.