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Mona Baker (ed.) *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*. London/New York: Routledge, 1998, 654 pp.

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In the introduction to the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, editor Mona Baker recounts that the idea for a reference book for translation studies had been suggested to her in 1991. Almost a decade later, with the publication of this pioneering resource, she is careful to remind the reader that no reference book can be comprehensive. In her view, however, a reader can expect a “balanced, non-partisan view of the discipline.” As editor, Baker has gathered 110 articles from ninety-five contributors, who collectively cite approximately 1900 bibliographical sources.

Baker, a Professor of Translation Studies at University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) in the United Kingdom, groups the material in two sections: “General” and “History and Traditions.” The “General” Section, which covers nearly three hundred pages, provides the interested reader or student of

translation studies with articles on such obligatory topics as Bible Translation, Machine Translation, and Torah Translation, by Eugene A. Nida, Harold L. Somers, and Michael Alpert, respectively. It also offers treatments of strategies for translation: the interpretative approach (Myriam Salama-Carr), linguistic approaches (Peter Fawcett), the literal approach (Douglas Robinson), semiotic approaches (Umberto Eco and Siri Nergaard), and speculative approaches (Marilyn Gaddis Rose). By including this kind of variety in her encyclopedia, Baker demonstrates the sense of innovation that surrounds translation studies as a new discipline. In keeping with this innovative spirit, the “General” section contains surprising articles as well, on subjects that have received less attention in the past, such as Qur’an Translation (Hassan Mustapha).

The encyclopedia’s inclusive structure also makes room for less academic, practical applications of translation such as court interpreting (Muhammad Gamal), dubbing (Mona Baker and Brano Hochel), and signed language interpreting (William P. Isham), the inclusion of which provides a link between the new discipline of translation

studies and the often academically-absent disabled community.

In addition to these applications, approaches and subject areas, *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* also contains articles on the processes involved in translation. For example, Wolfram Wills provides an article on “Decision Making in Translation,” Keith Harvey treats “Compensation,” Douglas Robinson provides an article on “Paraphrase,” and Kirsten Malmkjær offers an article on Unit of Measurement. These are areas that any translator or student of translation studies would be wise to read. In this way, Baker has created an indispensable reference book.

Part Two, however, extends the use of the volume to provide context and further information of a more ample scope. Entitled “History and Traditions,” the second half of the book spans almost another three hundred pages, and examines the history of translation practices in thirty-one countries or regions. As in Part One, the offerings are various and eclectic, consisting of both familiar histories and contexts, such as the Latin tradition on which Louis G. Kelly elaborates, and others that have been explored and disseminated to a lesser degree,

such as the article by Keneva Kunz on the Icelandic tradition. Baker provides a rationale for this wider, more inventive construction. As she writes in the introduction, “[A] reading of these histories can lead to interesting insights on such issues as the overall profile of translators and interpreters during different historical periods, the role of the translator and/or interpreter as it has been conceived by different communities, ...the amazing variety of activities that have been subsumed at different times under the general heading of ‘translation’, and the kinds of contexts in which translators and interpreters have had to operate” . Further, by including traditions such as the Arabic (for which Baker herself provides the article) and the Brazilian (treated by Heloisa Gonçalves Barbosa and Lia Wylér), this Encyclopedia, while again avoiding claims of exclusivity, contributes to the opening of wider avenues of investigation and scholarship within the still-emerging parameters of translation studies. There is a sense of possibility underlying the whole endeavor, a spirit of ongoing decisions regarding a present and future canon for the discipline. Baker, especially in Part Two, actively pursues what is new in the

field, as well as what must be included for the sake of tradition. This provides an academic point of entry for areas outside of the Western confines of inquiry, and also supplies more material for fruitful investigation than specialized books of a more narrow vision.

As a work of reference, the Encyclopedia is organized in an easy-to-use, accessible way. The articles in Part One are arranged in alphabetical order and include cross-referencing as extra assistance. In Part Two, the overviews are also arranged alphabetically and include thumbnail biographies of pertinent

historical figures and suggestions for further reading. The Encyclopedia also features an impressive fifty-five-page bibliography and a detailed index, along with a list of figures and tables used, as well as lists of consultant editors and contributors.

In conclusion, as Baker asserts, “A pioneering work of reference sets out to chart a territory that has hitherto not been charted, to capture the core concerns of a discipline in a state of flux.” *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* offers at the very least both an anchor point and a safe port for future navigation.

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