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Introduction: José Lambert and descriptive researchinto literature, translation and culture

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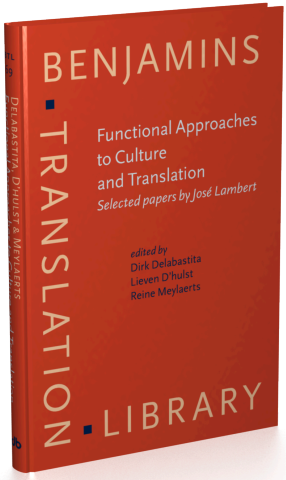

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Introduction

José Lambert and descriptive research into literature, translation and culture

This volume contains a generous selection of articles by Professor José Lambert, tracing in large part the intellectual itinerary of their author. Some four decades ago José Lambert started out as a young research student in French and comparative literature, trying to get a better grip on the problem of interliterary contacts, and he rapidly became a key figure in the emergent discipline of translation studies, where he is now widely known and valued as an indefatigable ambassador and promoter of descriptively oriented research. This collection shows how José Lambert has never stopped asking new questions about the crucial but often hidden role of language and translation in the world of yesteryear and today.

Life and works

José Lambert was born in 1941, in the village of Wingene, in the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. He studied Romance philology at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (K.U.Leuven), where he also obtained his PhD in comparative literature in 1972 with a thesis that was published as *Ludwig Tieck dans les lettres françaises. Aspects d'une résistance au romantisme allemand* (1976). After the defence of his thesis José Lambert was soon appointed as lecturer at K.U.Leuven's Department of literary studies (section: general and comparative literature), where he went on to become a full professor in 1979. His teaching included the fields of comparative literature and translation studies; indeed, he taught what may well have been one of the first courses in Europe on literary translation within comparative literature. He became a Professor Emeritus in October 2006.

José Lambert has lectured and published extensively in both the domains of comparative literature and translation studies. His early interests, as expressed by his PhD research, focused on the interliterary relations between France and Germany during the nineteenth century. The question of translation caught his special attention. Until then, translation had been a largely neglected area in comparative literature, being considered just another possible form of literary

contact, and certainly not one that could claim much interest, since it lacked the prestige, visibility and typological features of 'original' writing produced within the various national literatures. Therefore, its major influence on literary and cultural change was more often than not overlooked or downplayed.

In the early 1980s, José Lambert started a research project on the relations between translation and literature in France during the first half of the nineteenth century. He paid special attention to the ways in which translations behave within their new 'home' culture. This functional approach required new methods for the study of translations, which were later also applied to emergent literatures such as Belgium in its relation with France in the nineteenth century or postcolonial literatures in their relation with their European mothers in the twentieth century.

In 1989, he became one of the co-founders, with Gideon Toury, of *Target. International journal of translation studies*, which immediately established itself as one of the leading – many would argue, *the* foremost – journal in the field. In the same year, the need to prepare new generations of scholars in translation research led to the creation of a then unique training format called CERA (later CETRA: Center for Translation, Communication and Culture). The impressive list of CETRA-alumni links José Lambert and his CETRA colleagues to dissertations, publications and other research initiatives in five continents.

José Lambert has accepted important offices and duties in several other scholarly organisations as well, both in Belgium and on the international scene. Among many other things, he has been the European secretary of the International Comparative Literature Association (1985–1991), he served as assistant secretary of the *Fédération Internationale des Langues et Littératures modernes* (FILLM) (1985–1991), and he was one of the co-founders of the European Society for Translation Studies in 1992. He has been a visiting professor at a wide range of universities (including the University of Amsterdam, the Sorbonne at Paris III and IV, the University of Alberta in Edmonton, the University of Pennsylvania and New York University) and was appointed a research fellow in Göttingen (1989–1990). José Lambert was awarded the prestigious Belgian Francqui Chair at the University of Namur in 1992–1993.

José Lambert has been a very prolific author. The impressive list of his publications which we have included at the end of this volume numbers some 120 items and despite our best bibliographical efforts we dare not vouch for the completeness of the list. For the sake of easy reference our bibliography of José Lambert's writings has been arranged chronologically, with one entry being reserved for each publication quite regardless of size, range or scholarly impact. Of course, the blandness of this presentation obscures the importance of certain data that reveal the true scholarly value and influence of José Lambert's publication list over and beyond the quantitative dimension. As a closer look makes clear, he has published in several languages, in major journals and volumes all over the world,

he has published some ten edited or authored books, and he has contributed to the most important series, reference works and handbooks in the field.

The papers in this volume

In the present collection, we have taken care to include the articles that have acquired something of a 'classic' status in the field, but also a few lesser known papers that deserve wider circulation. Let us briefly present our selection.

The first article, "Traduction et technique romanesque" (1977), was not the first one written by José Lambert on translation, but it is no doubt the paper that launched most explicitly the research programme that was to broaden during more than ten years, covering numerous aspects of the descriptive study of literary translation. It starts with a discussion of the relationships between linguistic and literary approaches to translation and makes a plea for a new analytical model for translated texts partially based on insights gained from the work of the Czech scholars Anton Popovič and Jiří Levý. The idea of a *tertium comparationis* – a discursive matrix applicable to both source and target texts, and capable of laying bare the significance of such shifts as may be observed in translated narratives – favours a view of translations as texts that possess a proper identity, express aesthetic choices of the translator and correlate with literary life in general. The second part of the article gives an account of shifts occurring in French translations of Flemish and German prose of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It takes into consideration a number of relevant narrative categories such as register, tense, reported speech, narration and character. Without using the metalanguage of descriptive research being developed at the same time by scholars such as Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury, these analyses show close affinities with their work that were waiting to be developed in a more systematic way.

The second selection, "Production, tradition et importation: une clef pour la description de la littérature et de la littérature en traduction" (1980), elaborates on the idea of translated texts as constructs in their own right and integrates it into a larger view on literary communication and interaction. This perspective is profoundly indebted to polysystem theory as developed since the end of the 1970s by Even-Zohar. Three closely intertwined categories are put forward: production, tradition and import. *Production* covers all new messages of whatever textual kind that are being produced within a given system, roughly corresponding to what contemporaries would define as 'literature'; *tradition* and *importation* both comprise elements that are co-present within the system and interact with it, while still belonging to different systems. Translation, then, is a cross-cutting discursive procedure establishing relations and defining configurations between the three

categories. For example, texts imported via translation may combine with texts selected from the national tradition to revitalize the centres of production.

"L'éternelle question des frontières: littératures nationales et systèmes littéraires" (1983) critically questions the tenacious equation of *production* and national literature. The paper starts from a critical analysis of political, linguistic and cultural parameters employed in several recent companions to French literary history. Subsequently, Lambert proposes the idea of a *cartography* of European literatures which should give the literary 'provinces' their due place no less than the canonized centres. The last part of the paper focuses on the complex case of literature in Belgium, which seems to elude the parameters of traditional historiography. Historiography might therefore do well to start from the assumption that literatures are auto-organizing systems that produce *their own* parameters, among which the most prominent are norms and models, and internal hierarchical relations as well as relations with surrounding literatures. These remarks pave the way for a brief presentation of a new historiography of Belgian literature from 1800 on.

"On describing translations" (1985), which José Lambert co-authored with his K.U.Leuven colleague Hendrik Van Gorp, was published in Theo Hermans' influential collection *The manipulation of literature*. The paper offers a detailed methodology for the study of translations. It is based on a definition of translation as a communication process within a target system, related with a similar process taking place in a source system. There is no *a priori* qualification of what this relation is or should be, nor of the features of each communication process taken separately. Quite naturally, the heuristic stage receives a central place within the methodology itself: it helps the researcher to discover the most relevant features of translational communication at a given time within a specific literary system (e.g. textual features, aspects of distribution and reception, etc.). The researcher's focus may range from the treatment of linguistic elements to the global rationale of intersystemic relations. This article includes a very practical procedure for translation analysis, proposing a number of successive steps and checklists, and helping the researcher to describe and interrelate preliminary data, macro-structural and micro-structural features of the texts, and broader systemic contexts. As we shall see below, José Lambert and others have subsequently become aware of the serious limitations or even distortions inherent in a binary model of translation that neatly separates the 'source' pole from the 'target' pole, but this has not prevented the 'Lambert & Van Gorp model' from becoming and remaining a popular descriptive tool.

This group of texts is concluded by an overview of "Twenty years of research on literary translation at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven" (1988). It is one of the rare first-hand testimonies about the early history of the emergent subdiscipline of descriptive translation studies in the Low Countries. It helps us understand the role of institutional contexts, including tensions between established disciplines

and administrative structures (e.g. theoretical versus comparative approaches to literature; Romance versus Germanic philology). With both comparative literature and national literary histories having failed to treat translation very seriously, Lambert had to start his own work in what seemed like an institutional and scholarly void. Very soon, empirical research revealed the complex nature of translations for which no ready-made answers were available. An 'open theory', designed for historical descriptive research, seemed the best possible way to understand differences and evolutions in translational phenomena. Such a theory, initially designed by Itamar Even-Zohar in the early 1970s as part of his polysystem approach, was elaborated in detail by Gideon Toury around the concept of norm, which helps us grasp the basic patterns of translational behaviour and their relations with target literatures and cultures. Lambert finally indicates how his own research and that of his first-generation disciples took the form of projects on the position and role of translation within literature in France and in Belgium, and later in other cultural settings as well.

"In quest of literary world maps" (1991) takes up the discussion started in "L'éternelle question" (see above) and develops the idea of cartographies from a more fundamental, conceptual point of view. A first version of these insights had already appeared one year earlier in French (see bibliography: 1990d) and the English article was translated almost immediately into Spanish (1991c) and German (1993b). "In quest of literary world maps" certainly broke new ground and belongs to the author's most influential papers. It calls into question the institutionalization of literary research and teaching in terms of 'national literatures'. The near-monopoly of the romantic 'national' paradigm – one territory, one nation, one language, one literature – leads to anachronistic views on the literary world. The fact that literary scholars study literature preferably with the aid of political and/or linguistic maps means that they do not (yet) have models of their own. According to Lambert, the study of literature cannot be restricted to national literatures because developments in language, nation and literature are not well synchronized. The national model is poorly suited for the study of *intra*-national literary phenomena and relationships in multilingual contexts (like Belgium, Switzerland, South-Africa, etc.), and it is no more helpful for the study of complex and multiple *inter*-national (economic and political) relations between literatures. As an alternative, collective historical-descriptive fieldwork is needed to investigate the exact nature of the relations between linguistic, political and literary borderlines and to help us envisage new, multiple maps for past and present literary worlds.

James Holmes's foundational paper "The name and nature of translation studies" (Holmes 1975 [1972]) provides the basis for the next selection: "Shifts, oppositions and goals in translation studies: towards a genealogy of concepts" (1991). This article is the written version of a paper delivered at the Second James S

Holmes Symposium held in Amsterdam in 1990. Not only the "name and nature", but also the sheer existence and future of translation studies were at the heart of the symposium's often animated discussions. Lambert sets out with a historical overview of the various labels used to name the discipline. Among other things, such a genealogy of concepts shows that the discovery of the cultural component in translation studies – nowadays routinely referred to as the 'cultural turn' – is more indebted to the so-called descriptivists than they are given credit for. It also highlights a striking lack of terminological consensus, but, more than 'merely' being a question of terminology, these hesitations expose a lack of agreement on the object, the scope and the goals of translation studies: ultimately they raise the problem of the very status of a theory in general and of theoretical assumptions about translation more in particular. What is at stake for Lambert are the complex relations between theory and descriptive research: a theory deprived of its descriptive component is a vain and sterile enterprise, as the two have to be seen as complementary components, with empirical descriptive research having to test the validity of translation theory. Moreover, theories themselves never operate outside of history. The historical nature of theories again implies a redefinition of translation studies in hypothetical terms on the basis of empirical descriptive research. The article closes on a somewhat lighter note, paying tribute to the person of James Holmes. Lambert recalls how Holmes strongly oriented the discipline, but often in ways which have not been recorded in print.

"Literatures, translation and (de)colonization" (1995; Spanish version 1999b) further develops the idea of literary maps in their complex relationships with translation. Both on a conceptual and on an empirical-descriptive level, the article advances challenging insights concerning the mapping of (power) relations between cultures. Pursuing his intellectual campaign against the static Eurocentric model of 'national' literatures, Lambert envisages dynamic literary world maps, whereby conflicts between traditional and innovating principles of legitimacy act as a principle of change. Translation is a case in point for the discussion of such principles. The internationalization and continuous redefinition of societies are profoundly indebted to translation and communication. However, this fundamental role of translation is often ignored, because many of us keep using restrictive definitions of translation that exclude phenomena such as 'adaptation', 'imitation' and the like, or that necessarily reduce translation to complete texts, produced by individual writers and individual translators. Lambert also pleads for a widening of the source / target model because it reflects an outdated binary world view in which societies are assumed to be *either* one thing *or* the other. The reality of the internationalized world is often incompatible with the idea of binary oppositions in contact relations. In these new and complex contexts, translation behaviour is often correlated with power relations and political options and thus with issues of colonization and decolonization. Enlarging on these insights, the

article (re)formulates the (translational) relations between cultures in terms of basic import / export rules that shed new light on power relations between cultures, between colonizers and the colonized. Since 'importing' systems may be seen as 'passive' systems, they often import untranslated discourse which forces given populations to adapt themselves to the idiom and rules of the foreign visitors. This means that *non-translation* is no less fundamental for our investigation than translation. On the other hand, cultures that are characterized by language standardization, that prohibit the import of foreign languages or that submit translation to strict target rules, try to submit language and culture to territorial principles. In this sense, colonization is nothing else than an attempt to extend the territory.

"Translation, systems and research: the contribution of polysystem studies to translation studies" (1995) is again a more historically self-conscious piece, tracing back the origin of polysystem theory (PST) as viewed and lived by one of its first and most ardent advocates (see e.g. 1997b, 1998d, 2005a for later instances of such self-contextualisation). It could be said that José Lambert never changed paradigms and has remained 'faithful' to PST, but always in a critical way, remaining open to new evolutions and to the possibilities offered by interdisciplinary cross-fertilization. Developed in Israel by Itamar Even-Zohar, PST was introduced to a larger European audience at the colloquium on "Literature and translation" which José Lambert organized in 1976 in Leuven. Thanks to PST and building on the strength of this and later conferences, translation research managed to win a position within comparative literature and found more and more practitioners in a variety of contexts and networks, soon also in more institutionalized settings (e.g. the European Society for Translation Studies). Next to these institutional aspects, the article comments on the intrinsic characteristics of the model. One of the strengths of PST, according to Lambert, is that it seeks to provide models for research instead of mere theorizing. The central question is therefore not the ontological status of systems – does a system exist? is French literature a system? etc. – but whether the PS hypotheses can solve more problems than other hypotheses. Lambert also refutes the objection that PST is limited to research on literature and literary translation only (see also Lambert 2005a). True, the model is often associated with these domains, and among the many systemic models PST is the only one to use translation as its starting point, but its scope is still much wider. Thus PST has been successfully mobilized within cultural frames that were not envisaged from the beginning: South-East Asia, Korea, Africa, mass media, etc. Through translation studies more in particular, PST has re-examined the borderlines between linguistics and literary studies, and it is on the basis of PST that an interdisciplinary dialogue with the sociology of language and with sociolinguistics has been made possible. Lambert claims boldly that no other approach has gen-

erated more projects, questions and investigations between 1975 and 1995 than PST.

"Problems and challenges of translation in an age of new media and competing models" (1997) is one of several articles José Lambert has devoted to media translation and internationalization (see furthermore Lambert 1989e, 1990a, 1993c, 1996c, 1998b, 1998c, to name but those). The article offers open definitions of translation on the basis of insights into the role and function of translation in contemporary (media) worlds. In international contexts, Lambert argues, 'sameness' or 'symmetry' is incompatible with communication. Perfect communication is impossible. It is often even undesirable, so that the notion of the ideal reproduction of an original had better be discarded altogether. Translation in the new media age becomes a socio-cultural activity that may vary according to socio-cultural parameters. It can never be a totally individual matter, nor can it be limited to strictly verbal communication. Media translation (dubbing, voice-over, speech recognition, translating for the blind or for the hard-of-hearing, monolingual subtitles etc.) has indeed revealed continuous interactions between verbal and non-verbal sign systems, as well as between orality and literacy. Differences between 'national languages' are therefore no longer the key difficulty of media communication. Moreover, in contemporary business and media life, the foreign origin of messages is often concealed and the label 'translation' can no longer be reserved for entire, autonomous texts but has to include all sorts of text fragments that may contain non-translated words, patterns and structures. This means that the classical descriptivist definition of translation as 'something that is considered by a culture to be translation' is no longer satisfactory, since it sidelines an enormous quantity of texts that may not be called 'translation' while still fulfilling important cross-linguistic and cross-cultural functions in contemporary societies. Society itself will of course also benefit from a better understanding of the entire question of media transfer.

"From translation markets to language management: the implications of translation services" (1998; co-authored with Johan Hermans) exemplifies another major direction in which the scope of José Lambert's research interests and publications expanded in the 1990s (see furthermore 1996d, as well as Janssens, Lambert and Steyaert 2004 and forthcoming). Lambert and his co-author argue that if translation studies wants to update its views on culture and society, the discipline can no longer avoid (re)investigating under all possible angles the whole issue of translation in business environments. Given the fact that there was no research tradition to speak of, it was decided to carry out an exploratory investigation into the translation market in Belgium. The article discusses its findings from an interdisciplinary point of view and focuses on the relationships between the various partners involved in different business situations; its conclusions and recommendations clearly transcend the Belgian

context. Although the translation market is growing in terms of budgets, it remains in part a low-profile black market, where translation is not necessarily labelled as such and not regarded as part of serious business, so that it can be left to outsiders. Translators, treated as lower-category employees, are hardly ever involved in product planning. What seems to be needed is the integration of translators into the strategic teams, and of translation into the strategic goals of companies. Translations and efficient verbal communication more generally have to be regarded as a potential major *asset* of a company rather than as a financial or economic *liability*. But this presupposes a different view on 'language' altogether because it is in fact the whole language component that comes under pressure in the globalisation movement. A functional approach to language would result, among other things, in the recommendation that companies should accept that a distinction may need to be made between the utilitarian choices of the management (e.g. the convenience of using English as a *lingua franca*) and the needs and expectations of end-line customers in the multilingual market. The authors stress the massive consequences of this line of thinking: far beyond the endeavours of translation studies and translation teaching, the economic world and society at large will have to wake up to the realities of language management in the global marketplace.

"Cultural studies, the study of cultures and the question of language: facing / excluding the new millennium" (2000) offers further illustration of José Lambert's investment in debates about the cultural and societal importance of language and translation. Taking a recent essay by Doris Sommer (1996) as a typical instance, he suggests that most cultural studies programmes are ill at ease with the question of language inasmuch as they appear to disregard the link between language and identity. Other disciplines in the humanities too have tended to neglect the question of linguistic and cultural identity. The underlying reason is that the norm for identity remains territory and that territory refers to the nation. So, when borders start shifting and languages become mixed, the homogeneity of identity is under threat, and language becomes translation, a 'bizarre language' permanently on the move between two places. But in contemporary communication societies, Lambert argues, proximity or movement in space is no longer a necessary condition for communication to occur. Thus, among the principles that allow for a better distinction between virtual and traditional identities, the principles of language and communication become central. In the new world, language options are much more open, with competition and selection between languages replacing the single option of the national language. Translation – including its institutionalization and its new technologies – therefore has a strong impact on the very nature of communities and their identities by conditioning interaction and communication. Studying such mechanisms in the contemporary world is an urgent priority for our universities, but perhaps also a difficult challenge inasmuch as our state-

funded universities still seem to owe ideological loyalties to the old nation-based models.

"La traduction littéraire comme problème belge ou la littérature comme traduction" (2004), co-authored with other members of CETRA, derives from a paper given at the colloquium "Littératures en Belgique / Literaturen in België" (Leuven 2000). This programmatic colloquium was the first to be devoted to the study of literatures in Belgium from a functional, dynamic and multilingual perspective, enabling local realities to be assessed in a broader comparative framework. The colloquium largely grew out of more than two decades of research driven by José Lambert at the K.U.Leuven and one hears clear echoes of the pleas he made in much earlier papers such as "In quest of world maps" (1991; reprinted in this volume). Lambert's contribution is therefore both symbolic and programmatic, arguing as it does that literary scholars too often exclude 'minor' literatures from their global cartography or study them with static, monolingual and therefore inadequate models. In other words, it raises fundamental questions about literatures in a mixed culture. Two centuries of intra-Belgian translational relationships have amply demonstrated, according to Lambert, that 'Belgian' literature is an object of study that can never be monolingual. Any analysis that wishes to examine the functioning of literatures in Belgium, regardless even of translation, has to take into account the instability of languages and the competition between different linguistic and cultural options (Flemish, Dutch, Francophone, Walloon, French, German ...). Most of the time, as may be illustrated by their manifold linguistic and stylistic hesitations, translations appear to function within Belgium and are thus a 'Belgian' affair, reflecting the fluctuations and differentiations of literary positions and ambitions. Therefore, the sheer juxtaposition of the respective 'traditional' monolingual 'Flemish' and 'Francophone' literary canons can give us only part of the picture of literatures in Belgium. We need to attend to the struggle between linguistic options in a multilingual context, revealing the permanent hesitation between different centres and the problematic attempts at identity construction.

Beyond the printed page

If it is true that the significance of a scholar's contribution to a research domain seldom resides in his or her publications only, José Lambert certainly offers a striking example.

In addition to being a influential and widely published scholar, José Lambert has also meant so many other things to so many people in academia – as a colleague, teacher, MA or PhD thesis supervisor, mentor, PhD jury member, speaker, debater, administrator, organizer, lobbyist, networker, catalyst, and what

not. Anyone even faintly acquainted with the field of translation studies will know that it is nearly impossible to take part in a colloquium where José Lambert has not somehow left his imprint. Travelling from one international meeting to another (sometimes changing suitcases at the airport!), he has functioned as a real ambassador for the field. Inspired and inspiring as a speaker, he is also a generous and critical listener to others' contributions, always ready to offer questions, comments or suggestions (thereby occasionally taking the speaker's ideas far beyond their intended horizon: "*n'excluons rien*" was one of his favourites), and definitely not afraid to engage in a robust polemic where needed.

It is not surprising in retrospect that José Lambert (barely thirty-five at the time!) was the prime mover in the organisation of the aforementioned landmark Leuven colloquium on "Literature and translation" which brought together for the first time several of the most promising people in the field (the roll-call of speakers included the likes of André Lefevere, Raymond Van den Broeck, James S Holmes, Susan Bassnett, Itamar Even-Zohar, Gideon Toury and Hendrik Van Gorp). Or that, in the same year but in a different place (Stockholm), José Lambert stuck his neck very far out by arguing in the distinguished company of linguists and linguistically oriented scholars such as Coseriu, Wandruszka or Wilss that translation was a matter of culture as much as of language.

José Lambert's international reputation was soon established and he went on to accept several important institutional responsibilities in the research community. We have already referred to his involvement in the International Comparative Literature Association (ICLA), which enabled him to facilitate the establishment of a worldwide network of contacts and to put translation studies more firmly and more centrally on the map of comparative literature. He was indeed one of the people at the heart of a "translation studies lobby in the international comparative literature establishment", a lobby whose endeavours began "to bear fruit by the mid 1980s, when workshops on translation had become a regular feature at the triennial conferences" of ICLA (Hermans 1999: 13). That he became one of the founding members of the European Society for Translation Studies (EST), the first international organisation of its kind in the field, was a perfectly logical later step.

José Lambert understood well enough that research requires forums for debate and for the dissemination of its results. Witness not only his crucial involvement in the creation and the running of *Target* (1989–), but also the role he has played more recently as co-initiator of John Benjamins' online *Translation Studies Bibliography*, or his membership of several advisory or editorial boards of book series (e.g. Benjamins Translation Library, Studien zur Translation) and journals (e.g. *Romantisme*, *Quaderns: revista de traducció*, *Journal of literary studies*, *Transst*, *Filter* . . .).

José Lambert also realized that research entails the need for research training. We therefore wish to dwell once more on CETRA both on account of its intrinsic

importance and because more than anything else it bears the hallmark of what José Lambert has stood for as a person and a scholar. The prehistory of CETRA goes back to 1987 when he initiated the prestigious Penn-Leuven Institute for Literary and Cultural Studies, together with colleagues from the University of Pennsylvania. Research on translation – including then totally under-researched domains such as media translation – formed one of the components of this summer institute. It was the Penn-Leuven Institute that led to the creation by José Lambert of the CERA Chair for Translation, Communication and Cultures in 1989. The Belgian bank CERA was the first main sponsor and gave its name to the initiative. In 1994, when the bank ceased its sponsorship (prior to entering into a merger which marked its end as a corporate entity), CERA was cleverly rebranded as CETRA, a meaningful acronym with the original name still echoing between the letters. Quite appropriately, Gideon Toury was nominated as the first CERA Chair holder in 1989. Later CE(T)RA Professors to date have been Hans J. Vermeer (1990), Susan Bassnett (1991), Albrecht Neubert (1992), Daniel Gile (1993), Mary Snell-Hornby (1994), André Lefevere (1995), Anthony Pym (1996), Yves Gambier (1997), Lawrence Venuti (1998), Andrew Chesterman (1999), Christiane Nord (2000), Mona Baker (2001), Maria Tymoczko (2002), Ian Mason (2003), Michael Cronin (2004), Daniel Simeoni (2005) and Harish Trivedi (2006). The list amounts to the *Who-is-Who* in translation studies in the past two decades.

CETRA organizes an annual intensive doctoral and postdoctoral programme aimed at promoting research training and stimulating high-level research into the cultural functions of translation. After being based in Leuven for the first years of its existence, the operation moved to Italy in 1997, to the Istituto San Pellegrino: Scuola Superiore per Mediatori Linguistici, in Misano Adriatico. The programme offers a combination of lectures given by the Chair Professor, talks by guest scholars, theoretical and methodological seminars by staff members, individual tutorials with the Chair Professor and the supervisors, reading work and seminars. Selections of the papers delivered by participants were published in volumes edited by Clem Robyns (1994), Peter Jansen (1995) and Jeroen Vandaele (1999). Efforts have been made to add a virtual dimension to the programme, thus helping to overcome the practical space / time constraints of the summer session, by the use of e-mail, internet and Open & Distance Learning (ODL) techniques. Incidentally, as his bibliography shows, ODL teaching has in the 1990s come to add itself to the list of Lambert's main research themes.

In the many years of its existence CETRA has had its share of serious upsets, including the untimely death of André Lefevere in 1996 (less than a year after his Professorship), as well as an earth quake and 9/11 (both occurring in the middle of a session) and a serious airplane incident (keeping a CETRA professor grounded at home). This is not to mention the many practical problems José Lambert has had to deal with and which have ranged from the trivial to the more serious (the

permanent search for funding and an adequate institutional framework belongs to the second category). But none of these have ever been allowed to slow down the momentum of the enterprise. The revolutionary format of CETRA has benefited not only countless individual junior scholars by offering them a shortcut to successful research and international visibility, but it has also served the dynamics of the discipline as a whole. Referring to descriptive translation studies, Theo Hermans (1999: 14) has called CETRA "perhaps the most effective vehicle for propagation of the paradigm". Or, as Daniel Gile, himself a long-time CETRA associate but here speaking on behalf of the discipline, has recently put it, CETRA

> has become a mainstream pathway to TS [Translation Studies] to several hundred young scholars, and the links that arose between CE(T)RA alumni, between them and their instructors, and between the regular instructors themselves probably had a major role in giving cohesion to the TS community in spite of the wide spectrum of interests and research paradigms involved.
>
> [José Lambert] may thus have contributed to TS far more than any 'impact indicator' such as citation counts can account for, and the TS community is indebted to him. (Gile 2004: 8)

After having been at the helm of CETRA for what will very soon be two decades, José Lambert should find deep satisfaction in the knowledge that his darling brainchild has created the conditions for ensuring its own future. New generations of translation scholars, many of them issued from CETRA's own ranks, are able and willing to carry it forward entirely in the spirit of its creator.

Lessons for the future

Several of the articles included here testify to José Lambert's conviction that research itself is no less historical than the objects it studies; they document his interest in the history of translation studies, especially in the last quarter of the twentieth century, which has turned out to be such a crucial stage in its development. Studying this history reminds us that José Lambert has always been in the vanguard of conceptual and methodological evolution. Many of the ideas that he developed or fostered – alone or with others – turn out in retrospect to have had a fairly visionary quality about them. Consider his open concept of translation (and thus his readiness to embrace the notion of interdisciplinary research); his critique of closed and static linguistic and literary models based on the concept of the nation-state; his understanding of the importance of sociology and sociolinguistics for translation studies; his early critique of the binary source / target opposition; his awareness of translation as a hidden mechanism, often operating invisibly below or beyond the text level; the attention given to non-

translation; his promotion of a 'cultural turn' in translation studies *avant la lettre*; his fascination with the functions of language and translation in the modern media as well as in business contexts; his experiments with language and translation in virtual-learning environments; his belief in team research; and so on.

Some of the items in this list of ideas and interests may by now have lost their polemical edge or indeed their innovatory character, but this very fact may well be the most eloquent testimony to the importance of José Lambert's work. Whether he pioneered them solely or with others, or even borrowed them from others, he was always among the first to recognize their relevance and put them high on the discipline's agenda. It is good to remember that what is a self-evident and therefore anonymous truth today originated in many cases as a brainwave of creative and perceptive individuals.

Although being much of the time in the forefront of the discipline, José Lambert has never been keen to engage in critical dialogue with scholars waving the poststructuralist or postmodern banner. Nor have the latter seen Lambert as a natural ally or privileged partner – perhaps despite Edwin Gentlzer's (2001: 192) interesting claim that there is something distinctly "Joycean" about Lambert's argument "that every text, every word, contains 'translated' elements" while "translated texts may also contain many discursive elements that are *not* translated". In the end, the politicized positions and radical epistemological scepticism of postmodernism are too far away from Lambert's more confident assessment of the potential of scientific research in the humanities for a very fruitful dialogue between them to be possible. For better or worse postmodern approaches have been fairly successful in translation studies since the 1990s, so the effect of this restriction should not be underrated, but leaving it aside, the impression that prevails is that of José Lambert's great openness and sense of dialogue, and of a restlessly inquisitive and prospective attitude which in itself, regardless even of its object, should remain a lesson for future scholars: 'never stop asking questions'.

Much of the research programme of José Lambert can still be made more operational or is waiting to be applied to new corpora and cultural settings. We would therefore suggest that the present book not only has value as a retrospective survey of the achievement of a newly retired colleague, but that it also still holds out prospects and ideas for research in a forward-looking manner. It is in this double view that the three editors would like to offer this collection to the research community: as a record of past scholarly excellence, but also as a research perspective of enduring relevance for years to come. On a more personal note, and in what is really a very paradoxical gesture, we are happy to present this collection of papers to the man who wrote them. May José accept the gift as a sincere token of our respect and affection.

The editors