

## Critical archival research in Translation Studies: when a translation scholar becomes an archivist-researcher<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

In Translation Studies, we are increasingly seeing the use of archival materials that allow translation scholars to find out more about the working conditions of translators, their motivations and relationships with authors, editors or publishers, all of whom have always influenced their work to some extent. This paper builds on the knowledge of working with archival materials and other primary sources already described in Translation Studies, and is complemented by still-useful methods of source criticism and current topics that are addressed by historians dealing with archival research. Particular emphasis is placed on the critical approach of historians specializing in composition and rhetoric who are reassessing methods of archival research and ways of writing about it, and who are encouraging scholars to adopt the stance of archivist-researcher. The paper shows and further discusses the importance of their knowledge and possible application in Translation Studies.

Keywords: history of translation, socio-historical context, archival research, source criticism, archival materials, primary sources

Enfoque crítico de la investigación archivística en estudios de traducción:  
Cuando un investigador de la traducción se convierte en archivista-  
investigador

### Resumen

En los estudios de traducción encontramos una tendencia creciente a la utilización de materiales de archivo, que permiten a los estudiosos obtener información valiosa acerca de cuestiones como las condiciones de trabajo de los traductores o las relaciones con otros agentes (autores, editores o correctores) que siempre han influido en cierta medida en su labor. En este artículo partimos de la bibliografía disponible acerca de los métodos de trabajo con materiales de archivo y otras fuentes primarias, ya suficientemente descritos en los estudios de traducción, y la complementamos con una serie de aproximaciones novedosas en los ámbitos de la metodología de la crítica de fuentes y de las nuevas perspectivas empleadas por los historiadores en el análisis de los materiales de archivo. Hacemos especial hincapié en el enfoque crítico de los historiadores respecto de la composición y retórica, que ha permitido una reconsideración de los métodos de investigación archivística y de sus formas de escritura, alen-

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<sup>1</sup> This article was created during research for my dissertation titled “Russian Translations published by Kamila Neumannova’s publishing house” on which I am working at the Institute of Translation Studies, the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague.



tando a los investigadores a adoptar una posición de archivista-investigador. Discutimos y tratamos de remarcar la relevancia de estos planteamientos y de sus posibles aplicaciones en los estudios de traducción.

**Palabras clave:** historia de la traducción, contexto socio-histórico, investigación de archivo, crítica de fuentes, materiales de archivo, fuentes primarias

## Approche critique à la recherche archivistique en traductologie : lorsqu'un chercheur en traduction devient archiviste-chercheur

### Résumé

Dans les études de traduction, on utilise de plus en plus de documents d'archives permettant aux chercheurs en traduction d'apprendre davantage sur les conditions de travail des traducteurs, leur motivation et leurs relations avec les auteurs, éditeurs ou maisons d'édition, qui ont toujours influencé leur travail dans une certaine mesure. Cet article s'appuie sur les connaissances acquises pour travailler avec des documents d'archives et d'autres sources primaires déjà décrites dans les études de traduction. Il est complété par des méthodes toujours utiles de critique de sources et par des sujets d'actualité abordés par les historiens traitant de recherche en archivage. Un accent particulier est mis sur l'approche critique des historiens spécialistes de la composition et de la rhétorique qui réévaluent les méthodes de recherche archivistique et les façons de la rédiger, et qui encouragent les chercheurs à adopter la posture d'archiviste-chercheur. Cet article expose l'importance de leurs connaissances et de leur application dans les études de traduction.

**Mots-clés :** histoire de la traduction, contexte socio-historique, recherche archivistique, critique de source, documents d'archives, sources primaires

## 1. Introduction

Since the beginning of my master's degree, I have been interested in research concerning translation history. It was in 2013 that I dealt with exploring archival materials for the very first time, working on a project that mapped the history of the Institute of Translation Studies, which is now part of the Faculty of Arts at Charles University, Prague.<sup>2</sup> The second time, I searched for documents about Kamila Značková-Neumannová, a virtually unknown translator who created the first professional Czech translation of Mikhail Bulgakov's novella *The Fatal Eggs* in 1929, as part of research for my master's thesis. Now, working on research for my doctoral thesis, which this article is based on, I am further exploring the topic of my master's thesis and looking for materials documenting the activities of the *Knihy dobrých autorů* publishing house, with whom the translation of Bulgakov's novella was published. Operating in the Czech market at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the publishing house focused on translating the then-new works of world literature, such as books by Anatole France, André Gide, Jack London, but also new philosophical works like Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Antichrist* and *Ecce Homo*. During this research, I worked with many different types of documents—administrative documents, foundation charters, population

<sup>2</sup> The history of the Institute is rather complex and interesting, but I will only provide a brief outline. The Institute was founded in 1963 as the Institute of Translation and Interpretation at the University of November 17<sup>th</sup>. The University focused on the education of future experts coming from abroad, mainly from developing countries, as well as Czechoslovak experts in intercultural communication. After the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Institute was gradually moved to the Faculty of Arts at Charles University. At the same time, the University November 17<sup>th</sup> saw a change of leadership and has been remembered by many Czechs as the “University of Spies.”

records and, most recently, correspondence in particular (for some of these we could also use Gérard Genettes's [1997] notion of “paratext”). When working with these materials, it became increasingly clear that Translation Studies did not provide enough tools to deal with such primary sources, and a more critical approach to the evidence was needed. Therefore, I gradually shifted my attention from the papers of translation scholars to texts written by historians and archivists.

## 2. Working with Primary Sources in Translation Studies

The critical turn in Translation Studies in the mid-1990s “prompted researchers to investigate the cultural and sociological impact of translations on their culture” (Billiani, 2007, p. 6), and also to work with primary sources such as archival materials and interviews in order to research the context of the genesis and evolution of a translation. Despite this fact, until recently, there were relatively few articles in the field of Translation Studies on methodologies and methods of working with these primary resources, such as oral history and archival research. This is evidenced by Translation Studies articles that have been published after 2010.

One of them is Julie McDonough Dolmaya's article (2015) on the methodology of oral history, its potential application in Translation Studies, and the questions that should be considered by researchers when using interviews (such as: Will the interview be recorded and accessible to other researchers? To what extent is the memory of the interviewee reliable? What do repetitions and silences during the narrative mean? etc.). According to her research, translation scholars do not usually ask these questions; as she states:

Oral historians do, of course, sometimes discuss specific challenges related to translating oral testi-

mony [...], but references to translation studies research are infrequent. Likewise, translation studies has not adopted oral history methods, despite the advantages offered for historical research in translation studies. (McDonough Dolmaya, 2015, p. 196)

This is why she illustrates the importance of the above-mentioned questions on examples of oral historians' research and findings, and suggests possible solutions to these issues that the methodology of oral history provides.

Two years prior, Jeremy Munday attempted to bring translation scholars closer to the archivists' and historians' perspective, working with primary sources in two articles entitled *The role of archival and manuscript research in the investigation of translator decision-making* (first published in 2013 in *Target*, 25(1), here cited according to the 2015 edition) and *Using primary sources to produce a microhistory of translation and translators: theoretical and methodological concerns* (2014). In the former one, Munday deals mainly with a textual analysis of manuscripts and literary drafts, but he also explains domain-specific terms such as "archive," "manuscript" or "personal papers." Although he does mention several works of Translation Studies that examine the manuscripts of translators, he also says that these are underexploited. Munday says that these can facilitate the understanding of how translational norms can be reconstructed and can act as a bridge between what Gideon Toury (1995) calls the two major sources for the study of translational norms—textual and extratextual sources (2013/2015, p. 128). Munday understands manuscripts as "interim products which offer crucial and more direct access to the creative process that is literary translation and provide written evidence of the translator's decision-making" (2013/2015, p. 128). In the attached case study, he shows how cognitive processes can be understood based on a detailed analysis of manuscript

changes and handwritten amendments made to the draft. Munday also points out that analyzing drafts brings with it a "strong interdisciplinary element in its meshing with analysis from a literary studies tradition" (ibid.), but it should only serve as a complement to the empirical analysis of the product, i.e. the published translation. Even though the article focuses on textual and cognitive analysis of the manuscript, it also mentions several aspects that archival researchers consider essential. This includes the rareness of manuscripts in archival collections (as they are often discarded after the book has been published), complicated localization of materials related to the translator (sometimes they are to be found in the translator's estate, other times in the publishing house's archives), and the violation of the original order of the documents. The importance of these problems in archival research will be discussed in more detail below.

In his other article, Munday explores what methodologies should be used while studying correspondence, personal papers, and testimonies of translators and interpreters. Although works based on these primary sources have already been published in Translation Studies—one of them being Lawrence Venuti's *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995) which largely draws on Paul Blackburn's personal papers and his correspondence with Ezra Pound—Munday points out that primary materials such as personal papers, manuscripts and related archives and other testimonies are still "under-utilised in Translation Studies research, yet they are an indispensable resource for the investigation of the conditions, working practices and identity of translators and for the study of their interaction with other participants in the translation process" (2014, p. 64). This is partly because Translation Studies scholars have not acknowledged the value and limitations of primary materials as well as the meth-

ods employed by historians, social scientists and literary theorists to deal with these issues, and thus they are not prepared to tailor them in a way that can address the needs of the discipline (*ibid.*). And, partly, it is due to the fact that only primary text products are considered scientifically reliable objective records in descriptive Translation Studies, while extra-textual materials are, according to Toury (1995), subjective, unreliable, partial and distorted, and should therefore be treated with every possible circumspection (Toury, 1995, p. 65). Munday agrees, but he draws attention to the fact that—despite the empirical framework provided by Toury’s methodology—without the pre-textual or extra-textual material (i.e. drafts or interviews etc.) shedding light on the circumstances of the genesis and evolution of a project, the analysis is dependent on the analyst’s more or less subjective deduction of the process (Munday, 2014, p. 65). While in the previous article, Munday deals with subjectivity of the pre-textual material by using the analysis of drafts only as a complementary method to empirical research, in the investigation of correspondence, he uses microhistorical research methods that openly acknowledge the subjectivity of narratives (Munday, 2014, p. 68). Microhistory uses very small-scale qualitative analysis of archival material or testimonies in order to understand the day-to-day experience and choices of individuals (Munday, 2014, p. 67), in other words, to reconstruct a context based on the experience of one or more individuals. Munday uses the knowledge of historians and points out that while oral testimonies are “openly mediated” (by memory, interviewer etc.), the interpretation of archival materials, manuscripts and personal papers may be influenced by other aspects:

- 1) selection of materials that the archivist or curator will deem suitable for preservation or, on the contrary, unnecessary (materials related to translation were also considered unnecessary until recently)—in the case study described below, it was probably the publisher’s descendants who did not consider storing the documents of the publishing house important,
- 2) access to archival materials—some originators or their descendants do not wish their archives to be accessible,
- 3) deposit in a collection—translators’ papers are often stored in the collections of publishers, authors, diplomats, etc., which makes it difficult to locate them (and it can also affect the context in which they are perceived),
- 4) provenance and order, which the archivists try to preserve as much as possible within the collection, and the form of cataloguing, which is closely related to it—in both respects, so-called finding aids, which will be discussed below, can prove very helpful to researchers,
- 5) fragmentariness—usually, the archive does not contain all the documents that a researcher needs to construct a full picture, for instance, as shown in the case study below, they do not have access to both sides of the correspondence, but, as is mostly the case, only to the letters received,
- 6) digitization of communication and the associated destruction of documentation and development of hybrid archives.

These aspects and the permanent reminder that researchers need to remain cautious, always triangulate and compare the data—without specifying how such comparison or triangulation should be performed—led me to read some other Translation Studies works based on archival sources (e.g. Billiani, 2007; Linder, 2004; Venuti, 1995 and others), but unfortunately, these problems have been addressed less adequately than in Munday’s articles. For this reason, as Munday also notes, it was necessary to “turn to the experience of

historians and others” (Munday, 2014, p. 68), especially archivists and historians. On historians’ advice, I began reading texts about source criticism and also looking for articles on new insights into archival research.<sup>3</sup>

### **3. Working with primary sources from the historians’ perspective**

Primary resources stored in archives may, depending on the system of memory institutions and country legislation,<sup>4</sup> include letters, pictures, newspapers, statues, government documents and records, committee reports, tools, pottery, interviews, musical recordings, textiles, clothing, quilts, maps, coins, cookbooks, medical reports, manuscripts, etc. Before describing some methods of working with these sources, one must clarify why discussing and writing about these methods (even in scholarly articles) is so important to correctly presenting the results of archival research. According to experts on rhetorical and compositional archival research, the presentation of methods and procedures in publishing the results of archival research is very important to the transparency and credibility of such results. Barbara L’Eplattenier writes: “as we all know, historical studies are difficult to replicate—the time, money, and access to archival texts (our

primary sources) are difficult to come by,” and adds that if the methods applied are not mentioned in the article, “as readers, we are dependent on accepting the version or analysis presented to us” (2009, p. 73).

In the following sections, both the currently discussed methods and the traditional methods will be presented. From a chronological point of view, it would be logical to start with the traditional methods of source criticism, nevertheless we will focus on the more recent ones first. This is mainly because the currently discussed methods relate to working with the entire archival collection, its localization, and analysis of its state and subsequently the localization of specific materials within the collection. Therefore, researchers will use them at the beginning of their work, some of them even before they actually visit the archive in person. In contrast, the aforementioned source criticism will be used by researchers only when working with the primary sources themselves, that is, only when researching them, whether in physical or digital form.

#### **3.1. Current discussions on archival methods**

In analyzing current historical papers, Munday (2014) points out that the attention of historians is shifting from the so-called traditional history (describing the actions of “great men” and creating narratives of historical events based on official documents) to the new history “revealing the previously hidden lives and viewpoints of the silent majority” (2014, pp. 66–67). The narrative nature of their research results is one of the reasons why many scholars interested in archival research are currently discussing the transparency and credibility of the stories based on primary sources. These primary sources usually include personal papers, correspondence,

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<sup>3</sup> At this point, I would like to thank my mother, Markéta Lhotová, Ph.D., who recommended me to read specific chapters in several methodological textbooks for students of history, and helped me get my bearings in this field from the very beginning.

<sup>4</sup> In the Czech Republic, for example, only documents (printed, typewritten or handwritten materials) and material objects related to them (such as photographs, seals, stamps, etc.) are usually stored in archives. Published texts are mostly stored in libraries (but may also be part of an archival collection, for example, if these books/magazines belonged to some prominent personalities and include their notes), while material objects are predominantly administered by museums.

diaries, photographs, etc., which are often fragmented, incomplete, distorted and in poor condition. Susan Miller even writes about the need to avert attempts to marginalize archival research (Miller, 2002, p. 52). Therefore, L'Eplattenier suggests that research papers, in addition to the methodological section describing the goals of the given research, should also contain a methods section that will introduce the reader to “the pragmatic components involved in obtaining the materials that are the foundation for the stories” (L'Eplattenier, 2009, p. 71). In her opinion, a good methods section that gives the reader a sense of what was studied, where it was located, and how it was examined should include:

[...] the name and location of the archives; the finding aids used to locate information; the amount of time spent in the archives; the number of linear feet in a collection; the amount of the collection examined; the provenance of the artifacts; the physical state of the artifacts; problems, issues or difficulties with the materials; interesting facts about the materials; missing articles from the archives; and the specific types of materials examined. (L'Eplattenier, 2009, p. 71)

A very good example of such a methods section in Translation Studies research is chapter 3 of Charlotte Berry's doctoral thesis (2013). Researching the translations of Nordic children's literature into English, Berry benefits from her experience as an archivist and provides a detailed description (chapter 3 has about 50 pages) of what archives she used, how she located them, what their fates were and what their current state was in terms of physical condition, cataloguing, accessibility, etc. She also addresses the issue of hiring a third party for a part of the work she could not perform herself for financial reasons (namely because of high travel costs) or because of access restrictions. As she says, this collaboration may have caused some important sources

to be missed (Berry, 2013, p. 189). Last but not least, she also explains how the availability and the state of resources have influenced the choice of topics she deals with. She explicitly states:

[...] the selection of the two case studies to follow has been wholly dictated by the availability of relevant and sufficiently detailed archival resources, sometimes with additional oral history resources providing additional backup. (Berry, 2013, p. 199)

Geraldine Susan Brodie (2012) also included pragmatic issues of the work with archival materials in her doctoral thesis. Among other things, she deals with the differences in the level of cataloguing in private and official archives and compares the accessibility of archives for researchers in the United Kingdom and the United States (Brodie, 2012, p. 20). However, such methods sections are not yet common practice in Translation Studies archival research.

L'Eplattenier's article was followed by other scholars; for example, three years later Lynée Lewis Gaillet writes: “archival researchers are only now consciously examining the interplay of method and methodologies, along with trying to make their goals and practices transparent” (2012, p. 36). Gaillet, who provides an overview of the current status of archival research, greatly appreciates the efforts of historians, but also of researchers from other areas of humanities and social sciences to understand the work of archivists, their terminology, practices, and to gain much more from working in the archives than they did. In other words, she sees the future of archival research in researchers becoming archivists-researchers. Gaillet's notion of “archivists-researchers” also inspired the title of this paper.

For historians and, in my opinion, translation scholars, *Working in the Archives* (Ramsey,

2010)<sup>5</sup> may be of use in this regard. In this book, anyone interested in archival research may learn how researchers should organize their work in an archive, where they may find the information they need to get oriented (especially in the chapter called Archival Survival), as well as how archivists structure finding aids, what data should be included in them, etc. (especially in the chapter called Invisible Hands). Understanding the principles of the archivists' work also helps researchers organize the acquired knowledge and create their own archive of studied sources (Gaillet, 2012, p. 53). This is an important part of archival research. We have to keep in mind that due to travel costs, access restrictions and other factors, many materials can only be accessed once by the researcher (often without the possibility to carry out their own photo documentation) and therefore it is necessary to clearly structure the acquired knowledge and write down everything of importance. In other words, organizing the acquired knowledge and creating researchers' archives is a way to deal with the often-discussed issue of access to archival materials.

Although Gaillet (2012) appreciates interdisciplinarity concerning the concept of an archivist-researcher, she also points out that when scholars begin to work outside of their areas of specialization, which is often the case in archival research, there is a greater chance of misinterpretation and misrepresentation. She draws attention to the fact that if researchers try to investigate the primary sources created in a different community, it is almost impossible to remain objective. "Even when attempting to have an agenda-free research plan, our humanity often gets in the way" (Gaillet, 2012, p. 42). Similar conclusions are drawn

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<sup>5</sup> L'Eplattenier and Gaillet also contributed to this book.

by Linda S. Bergmann, who revises her earlier research and points out that "the potential to identify closely and uncritically with selves represented in an archive can be greater than the temptation to identify with authors of published sources" because of the personal contact with the real materials closely linked to their personal lives (Bergmann, 2010, p. 230).

Gaillet's article (2012) also highlights the discussion among historians concerning the risk of the borrowing and blending of methods, which is another very important topic for Translation Studies researchers. Some historians argue that borrowed methods may not meet the discipline's ideas of valid research. Others warn against misunderstanding the methodology of other disciplines and the resulting "superficial borrowings." In general, however, they agree that the borrowing of methods is inevitable with the current interdisciplinary nature of research, but must be approached responsibly, consciously, and critically (2012, p. 45). These are the principles that I had in mind when writing this article.

Historians and archivists also deal with the issue of how digitization impacts the development of archival work, which Munday (2014, see above) also mentions in his article. Gaillet looks closer at its effects on the pragmatic aspects of archival research and draws attention to the limitations of digital research discussed among historians: 1) without a personal visit to the archive, the researcher will not get a good idea of the size of the collection, the condition of the archival materials, etc.; 2) due to the lack of financing and staff, digitized materials may not be updated and available in the latest formats; 3) notes in margins may not be visible in digital previews (due to light color of ink/pencil and worse scannability); 4) finding aids may not be available in digital form and the researcher also has no access to the



support of an archivist. The positive aspect of digitizing archives is that it enables access to collections for a larger number of researchers, reduces the costs and difficulties of traveling to remote archives, benefits interdisciplinary research, and potentially allows researchers to expand existing archives (some scholars consider the whole Internet to be a big archive) (Gaillet, 2012, p. 49).

The above-mentioned books and articles on archival research show that in recent years, historians and archivists have mainly addressed issues relating to the pragmatic circumstances of working with primary sources. Unfortunately, these pragmatic issues of archival research, which greatly influence its results, are not yet of interest to translation scholars working with archival materials. For this reason, they also do not ask questions such as: How does the accessibility of individual collections affect their research? Does it affect the time researchers spend working with archival materials? And how do researchers choose their research topics—according to their significance or to the amount and completeness of the materials available? Among the pioneers in introducing these questions into Translation Studies are Munday (2014), Berry (2013) and Brodie (2012). In the following section, the methods that historians use to process and “triangulate” the information contained in the primary sources will be presented. Their possible use in the research of translation history will also be mentioned.

### 3.2. Source criticism and interpretation

Source criticism is a set of methods that has been used in historical sciences since the 19th century. Source criticism leads scholars to verify the authenticity of the source and also to examine the circumstances of its origin that could affect its content. These methods soon

began to be used not only by historians, but also by scholars of related disciplines. For example, Herman Paul (2014) describes how musicology accepted source criticism as an important method at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, and how this acceptance changed both the understanding of music history studies, and its goals.<sup>6</sup> The advocates of this method sought to gain knowledge of the development of music that would serve other generations of artists, and therefore recommended their students to apply source criticism, for example, to Mozart’s *Requiem* manuscript. Their opponents, on the other hand, argued that “such a technical examination [...] miss[es] the whole point of studying this sublime piece of music” (2014, p. 175). The aim pursued by the advocates of source criticisms was similar to the current efforts to investigate translators’ decision-making process based on their manuscripts (Bush, 2006; Filippakopoulou, 2008; Munday, 2013/2015; Pijuan Vallverdú, 2007; and others). Linguists studying the development of language with historical sources as well as literary historians have also made use of the methods of source criticism. In one example working with medieval Russian chronicles, J. S. Luria (1968) showed how the well-known Russian philologist Aleksey A. Shakhmatov and his disciples revealed the political and social influences that the authors of the chronicles worked under using the principles of external and internal criticism. Their findings led to a reassessment of the importance of the chronicles as sources of objective information on historical events. On the contrary, the chronicles have become valuable sources for most researchers studying the ecclesiastical-political history of Russia.

<sup>6</sup> Paul concludes that the methodological books recommending source criticism served the advocates “as polemical interventions in debates on the nature and implications of a scholar’s vocation” (2014, p. 172).

The fact that source criticism forces researchers to deal with the circumstances of the origin of the source, including the motivations of its author, the power pressures, and the social and political context, is probably the reason why source criticism is still one of the basic methods that every student of history should learn. For example, Gaillet (2010) states that the three primary parts of a traditional historical analysis are: external criticism, internal criticism, and synthesis of materials (p. 31). Unfortunately, she does not explain how she understands these concepts. One of the older Czech textbooks introducing students to history studies presents the basic parts of the historian's work in a very similar way: external criticism, internal criticism, and interpretation (Kvaček, 1985, p. 168). These notions will be explained in the following paragraphs.

“External criticism” in the aforementioned textbook “detects the authenticity of the primary source, verifies or determines its origin in terms of time and authorship, clarifies the situation that led to the origin of the source”<sup>7</sup> (Kvaček, 1985, p. 168). This means, first and foremost, finding the date and place of origin, as well as authorship in cases where such data are not included in the archival material. These should be the first steps the researcher takes. Robert Kvaček points out that the origin of the primary source must be known as accurately as possible, otherwise it may be misunderstood or misinterpreted (*ibid.*). Sometimes, it may also be necessary to go back to external criticism in later stages of the work, for example if the necessary data (author's name, date and place of origin) are listed, but further investigation has shown that they may be incorrect.

<sup>7</sup> All translations are my own, unless otherwise stated.

“Internal criticism” is performed when already investigating the contents of the primary source. In the case of Translation Studies, this is usually when reading or listening to (if recorded) a text. The aim of this stage of criticism is “to assess the content of the source, the author's motivation and the factors that could influence the content” (*ibid.*). It can also help define the period or area in which the document may have originated, if a particular location or date could not be identified during external criticism. Similarly, it can narrow the circle of people who might have authored the text (the content or language used may point to their occupation, education, social class, gender, etc.). This textual criticism focuses on what perspective the event is viewed from (whether the author themselves participated in it or describes it according to someone else's account), how the atmosphere of the period is reflected in the event descriptions, and whether or not these are biased by external political or social pressure acting on the author, their own feelings, or self-censorship (1985, p. 171).

“Interpretation” is defined as “complete and versatile knowledge and understanding of the purpose and place of the source in contemporary contexts. If the source contains text [written or spoken], then the goal of interpretation is primarily to understand the content and meaning of the source as a whole and its individual information” (Kvaček, 1985, pp. 174–175). It is therefore a synthesis of knowledge gained during external and internal criticism; in other words, putting the pieces together to give the researcher a more complete and more meaningful picture. In order to obtain such a picture, it is necessary to have considerable knowledge of the period, the author—if known—and of the circumstances, if it was possible to deduce these from other sources. Many other sources therefore need to be consulted, and the data provided by the source criticism “triangulat-

ed.” Gaillet (2012) explains that triangulation is “the watchword among archival researchers in codifying data; [...] researchers frequently discuss triangulation in connection with storytelling—based on rich, thick investigation and corroboration of data” (p. 51). On the issue of interpretation or “triangulation,” Kvaček adds that the wider the knowledge the researcher has previously acquired, the more they are able to extract from the source (1985, p. 175). For example, in my own experience, this makes it easier to find out which information is new, which event interpretation is repeated, and the researcher can better identify allusions to other documents, and so on. If they also have some idea of how events in the author’s life unfolded, they can more easily discover whether documents in the archival collection are distorted or missing.

In the following sub-sections, we will focus on some of the aforementioned problems, to which Translation Studies often do not pay enough attention, although they can significantly influence the interpretation of the source.

### 3.2.1. *Date and place of origin*

As mentioned, the date (or time) and place of origin are often recorded directly on the document (or, if not directly on the document, they may be on some related material, for example, the date may be retrieved from the envelope stamp), but sometimes these data are completely missing or may be incorrect. Kvaček (1985) states that the data may be unintentionally or intentionally inaccurate. This can be seen, for example, in cases of artistic falsification (such as the Ossian cycle of epic poems) or in cases where author intended to hide from a repressive state apparatus, disguising clues about where they were from law enforcement and their co-workers in case the documents were

seized. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the place and circumstances of how the material was found, the language of the period, and any references to events or persons (Kvaček, 1985, pp. 168–170). However, many dating errors also arise inadvertently or, as the case may be, by official practice—some forms are pre-filled in advance, others may be backdated.

In the case of older texts, the currencies or units of measurement in the text may help researchers to determine the origin of the document, as they are able to seek information on when the currencies or units were used in numismatics manuals or in historical metrology manuals. Similarly, in the case of an already unused type of official document, another field of auxiliary sciences of history—e.g. diplomatic—may provide more detailed information (including the time period). From my own experience, it might be that thanks to the references to upcoming or recently published books or other events, the researcher is able to determine at least a time range, if a precise date is not available. Well-prepared finding aids can also help researchers. In addition to the general timeframe of the entire collection, these should also indicate how the documents were originally sorted within the collection (for more information about finding aids, see chapter *Invisible Hands* in Ramsey, 2010). It is precisely the knowledge of the original sorting, or of which materials preceded the undated document and which came after it, that can help define the period of origin of the source.

When examining primary sources within Translation Studies, we may also encounter undated documents. For example, in the correspondence of Blackburn and Pound, some letters were not dated: “Some of the correspondence is dated, either by the correspondents or by archivists; dates I have conjectured on the basis of internal evidence are indicated

with a question mark” (Venuti, 1995, p. 322). As can be seen, Venuti either fully trusted the dating put forward by archivists or his own research did not give him any hints that would question this post-dating. Regrettably, Venuti does not disclose what information helped him fill in the dates where they were missing.

A more precise timing is also problematic for pasted texts/words in the manuscripts of a translation. With the David Bellos drafts analyzed by Munday, for example, it turned out that there were two sets of revisions in Helen Lane’s original printed translation made by Bellos.

These revisions are in pen and pencil. It can be presumed that these were done at different times since those in pencil, which we shall call Draft 2, are much more substantial and often involve a complete rewriting of Draft 1. (Munday 2013/2015, p. 132)

Munday’s description suggests that the older and newer versions were determined by a qualitative analysis of the content, so we could say that he used a certain type of internal criticism to define the time of origin, especially the chronological order of the revisions. Based on this analysis, he could then define what he would consider to be Draft 1 and Draft 2.<sup>8</sup> This step may seem banal or unnecessary, but for the reader and for the credibility of the research, as was mentioned before, a brief description of this process is very important.

### **3.2.2. Authorship**

Kvaček (1985) points out that the determination of authorship is often a difficult or im-

possible task. In some cases, it is sufficient to know the institution, social circle or ideological environment in which the archival material emerged (1985, p. 169). However, the more the researcher knows about the author, the more they can find out and verify whether the author could have been a direct witness of the events described in the document, or whether they recorded them according to information from other participants or another document (1985, p. 171). The researcher can build on these findings with internal criticism, analyzing, for example, the author’s motivation or factors that led them to writing the information in that particular form. The author’s position in contemporary social structures, their observational and expressive abilities, education, occupational position, function and relation to particular power structures and their institutions are important for correct interpretation of findings. These factors are also studied within the sociological direction of Translation Studies, which draws inspiration from the works of Pierre Bourdieu (1984) (in particular from his concept of an individual’s habitus and of a field as a dynamic space in which this habitus is formed), and they often affect the study of archival materials when addressing the impact of censorship on translation. Francesca Billiani states that “drawing on Bourdieu’s reflections, we can deduce how textual manipulations can be explained in greater depth if interpreted as a result of those dialectic relations that produce constantly changing habitus circulating in a certain field” (Billiani, 2007, p. 9). That is why the methods of source criticism can still be beneficial for researchers-translation scholars.

When examining processed collections, the researcher usually knows the author of the source, be it an individual, a company or an institution (and it should be noted that unprocessed archival collections are rarely available

<sup>8</sup> The examination of different versions of manuscripts and the genesis of a text is the subject of study of so-called “genetic criticism” or “manuscript genetics” (Agostini & Lavieri, 2015, and Cordingley & Montini, 2015, use this methodology in Translation Studies).

to researchers). This information is usually included in a finding aid using which the researcher should know who the author / original owner of the entire collection is, and who the authors of the individual parts are (if the collection consists of documents from multiple authors). If an electronic database contains sufficiently detailed records, or if the finding aids are already digitized, the researcher may, in my own experience, also search an Internet database and find out, for example, who the senders and recipients of a particular correspondence are. As a result, the researchers can request only those parts of the author's or translator's correspondence that are of relevance to them. A similar experience is described by Berry, who states that thanks to databases and highly professional and helpful archivists at the University of Reading (especially in the case of "cataloguing backlogs"), she managed to carry out good preparatory work and to reduce travel costs (Berry, 2013, p. 188).

The issue of identifying the author(s) can also arise in pasted texts / words, especially in printed or typed official documents, where we simply cannot compare handwritten notes with the rest of the handwritten text. Sometimes there are initials attached to these embedded texts that facilitate the identification of the author, as in the case described by L'Eplattenier: "This transcript is annotated by 'C.F.S.'—Mount Holyoke's Clara Frances Stevens, who often changed a word or two throughout the manuscript and initialed the entries" (L'Eplattenier, 2009, p. 73). But in many other cases, researchers are not that lucky. Uncertainty regarding authorship can be seen, for example, in Daniel Linder's description of documents stored in the censorship office archive: "The censor has duly crossed out the passages from the typewritten copies, and the proofs contain marks, supposedly written by the editor, showing that the suppressions had been made"

(Linder, 2004, p. 164). Because the documents are not described in more detail, several questions come up while reading: Why does Linder conclude, when writing about the proofs, that these marks are editor's revisions? Was it because of the different handwriting? Was it possible to compare the handwritten notes to any text handwritten by the editor? Does Linder's assumption stem from knowledge of official procedures and the historical context?

Venuti's (1995) very brief description of the relatively complex situation also raises questions:

Later Pound explicitly endorsed Blackburn's translations, instructing Dorothy Pound to write that "you have a definite feeling for the Provençal and should stick to it" and then arranging for the publication of one version. In a typescript added to Dorothy's letter, Pound wrote: "[Peire Vidal's] 'Ab l'alén' sufficiently approved for Ez to hv/forwarded same to editor that pays WHEN he prints" (12 August 1950). (Venuti, 1995, p. 227)

To readers who do not know the material, it is not clear what makes it apparent that the letter was written by Dorothy Pound, while the enclosed typescript was written by Ezra Pound himself. And this gives rise to much more fundamental questions, for example—what about the letter's content revealed that Ezra Pound did not write it himself? Could Dorothy somehow interfere with the wording of the letter, or did it really convey Pound's words as he spoke them?

These examples illustrate that any trivia such as references to initials, handwriting comparisons, and other aspects of the rather physical appearance of the investigated primary source can make our research results more transparent. In L'Eplattenier's words, they can "make the invisible work of historical research visible" (2009, p. 69).

However, it is also worth mentioning that primary sources can help illuminate the authorship of published books, where authorship is usually not questioned. One such example is Linder's research on archive censorship materials, which led him to conclude that the translations of Chandler's *The Big Sleep*, published under the name of the well-known translator Juan G. de Luaces, were actually authored by Francisco F. Mateu. By publishing these pirated translations under Luaces's name, Mateu managed to defy his previous censorship ban (Linder, 2004, pp. 162–163). The second example is grant research conducted by students and scholars of the Institute of Translation Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague, which resulted in the publication *Slovo za slovem* (Word by Word) (Rubáš 2012). This research was based on interviews with translators (conducted, at least partially, in accordance with the oral history methodology), and focused on revealing the fates of translators in the period between 1948 and 1989, who were banned by the Czechoslovakian totalitarian regime. These translators had to translate secretly and publish their translations under the names of their friends and colleagues.

#### 4. Case study: Kamila Neumannová's small publishing house

This section will present the findings of my ongoing research. This is mainly in the phase of locating relevant primary sources, i.e. in the process of looking through catalogues, finding aids and, subsequently, browsing those parts of collections, which, according to available information, seem promising. Nevertheless, this preliminary work with primary sources and the small pieces of information that have already been obtained this way will be displayed.

Kamila Neumannová (according to Zach, 1976, and 1995) was one of the first female

publishers in the Czech lands. She founded a small publishing house in 1905, during a difficult moment in life in which she was left alone with two children following a divorce, and needed a source of income for her family. She mainly published translations of modern literature into Czech, with participation from members of the Czech Decadent Group. Although the work of her publishing house was interesting, and the published titles significantly influenced future Czech writers as well as the graphic form of Czech books, Neumannová's archival collection, stored in the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature under the reference number 1183, is very modest. The following section will present the collection and the current state of archival research carried out as a complement to the corpus-based study of Russian translations published by Neumannová.

The archival collection contains 30 pieces of correspondence written by 17 different senders, 2 letters sent by Neumannová to unknown recipients, and an inventory of books published during the first 25 years of her publishing house. It is publicly accessible, well catalogued (mostly, the date and author are mentioned, but unfortunately not the topic of correspondence) and the digitized information comparable to finding aids is accessible online through the web portal of the Czech archival collections (<http://www.badatelna.eu/>).

Unfortunately, this collection was compiled by various gifts and purchases, so it is rather a fragment of a collection or estate. In addition to personal messages, which are unintelligible without knowing the context, it contains some information relevant from a translation perspective. First and foremost, there is one letter showing that Neumannová did not always contact new translators herself, but sometimes

through translators she had previously worked with:

[12.02.1913]

Milostivá paní,

samožřejmě, že můžete s Dívkou se zl. oč. [zlatýma očima] naložit, jak Vám libo — snad je Váš dotaz až příliš formální — toho přeci netřeba.

Víte, že zemřel pan Blahovec — o překladatele méně — škoda — snad se mi podaří získati někoho jiného. [...]<sup>9</sup>

(Dear madam,

Of course, you can deal with *The Girl with the Golden Eyes* as you please—your question may sound a little too formal—you know there is no need.

You know that Mr. Blahovec died—one translator less—I hope I will manage to find someone else. [...])

This letter is not dated, but the approximate date (probably a few days newer than the actual one) could be read from the post stamp on the envelope (according to the stamp, the letter was sent from the post office in Prague 1). The date can also be read from the archival records, but it was necessary to verify it by carefully studying the slightly blurred stamp and the contents of the letter to see if there was any clue to verify the dating. Such a clue is the mention of the translation of Honoré de Balzac's novella *The Girl with the Golden Eyes*. According to the National Library records,<sup>10</sup> this novella was first published by Kamila Neumannová in 1907 and a reissue came out in 1913. Therefore, dating the letter to Feb-

ruary 1913 seems very likely. The letter ends with an unreadable signature. If we only had this signature, determining the authorship of the letter would be impossible, but the archival records indicate Kamil Fiala as the author, which seems to be correct, since Fiala is—as referred to in the National Library records—the translator of Balzac's aforementioned novella. Thus, the historical method of external source criticism proves very helpful, because in addition to basic identification of the source, it also helps the researcher place the source in already-known circumstances.

When analyzing the text (using the terminology of historians when performing internal or textual criticism), we find that Fiala's letter (which looks more like a telegram, albeit handwritten) probably responds to Neumannová's request for permission to reissue his translation. Secondary literature on the history of this publisher (Zach, 1976; Zach, 1995<sup>11</sup>) states that the publishing house found itself in financial difficulties several times, and attempted to solve these problems by reissuing older and economically successful translations. Therefore, it seems that Balzac's novella was one of these successful titles. Based on the tone of the letter, Kamil Fiala was probably the one who established cooperation between the translator Emanuel Blahovec and Neumannová's publishing house (Blahovec translated three books for the publishing house), which is why Fiala says he will hopefully *manage to get another* translator. Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to determine the date of Emanuel Blahovec's death, so this reference could not serve as further evidence of the letter's date. However, the approximate date of this letter

9 Fiala, K. (1913, February 12). [Letter to Kamila Neumannová] Neumannová Kamila collection (coll. 1183, box Korespondence vlastní—Přijatá, folder Fiala Kamil). Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature, Prague, Czech Republic.

10 Souborný katalog České republiky / Union Catalogue of the Czech Republic. <https://www.caslin.cz/> Accessed April 15, 2019.

11 Although Aleš Zach's publications deal with the publishing house mainly in terms of library studies and bibliophilism, they have been a valuable source of basic information about the history of the publishing house.

will allow future researchers to find out more about this translator, for example, in registry records or population records.

While all these findings and their interpretations only provide fragments of information, they also raise important questions: How did this publisher actually work? Who assigned individual jobs to individual translators and who chose these translators? How much money did translations cost? And were there any fees for reprints?

Since this letter relates to the topic of translation much more than any other, it is clear that Neumannová's archival collection is insufficient to create a more complex picture of her publishing business. The next logical step was to look for her co-workers' estates. Unfortunately, some of them have published under one or more pseudonyms, which makes identifying and locating their documents a little harder. So far, the possible relevant documents have only been located in the collection of the German translator Alfons Breska, also stored in the Literary Archive, under reference number 130. This collection is much more extensive and includes 5 letters from Neumannová as well as the translator's diary. Other translators' estates seem to be rather fragmentary, so recently discovered correspondence by Neumannová with Josef Portman, a Prague librarian, containing 97 letters and also stored in the Literary Archive under reference number 1340, seems to be the most promising clue at the moment, but the catalogue does not provide any information on its thematic focus.

Based on the data regarding the collection, its size and its state of play, provided in line with the recommendations of the archivists-researchers described by L'Eplattenier, Gaillet and others, it is hopefully clear that, despite the limited results, the research already per-

formed was very time-consuming. This is mainly because a vast majority of sources are handwritten and difficult to decipher in order to determine whether or not they are relevant. Unfortunately, the newly located documents have not yet been deciphered.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to introduce anyone interested in archival research to the methods used by historians working with primary sources, and which have so far rarely appeared in the work of translation scholars. Emphasis was placed on the critical approach to both the sources and their interpretations, as well as the presentation of the results of archival research.

The introduction to the presented approaches—the one of historians specializing in composition and rhetoric, who demand a responsible and transparent presentation of both the results and the course of research, and the traditional source criticism—was completed by a case study. In the study, we showed how these two approaches complement each other and what results can be achieved by joining them. The reason this connection is so valuable is that the first approach encourages researchers to include all information concerning the course of their archival research, the status of the documents and the collection they belong to in the presentation of the results of their research, in addition to the findings from individual sources. Such methods sections help the readers of scholarly articles as well as future researchers understand how much of the collection has been processed, how the particular research has been conducted, why it has been conducted in such a way, and what possibilities exist for further research. This information is well complemented by the latter approach, which helps researchers extract the



most out of every document, including, for example, more accurate dating, authorship, purpose, etc., making it possible for them to put the information into the context of what is already known about the given topic.

Unfortunately, given the current state of the author's own archival research, it was not possible to show how all of these methods could be applied to current research. Therefore, their significance and the questions which they might provoke were presented using already published archival research of other scholars in the field of Translation Studies. We showed that some translation scholars already use some of these methodologies, others use them at least in part. However, based on our experience so far, methods sections and information about how dating, authorship and author's motivation was determined should be included in every article presenting the findings of archival research, because this information helps the researcher support their arguments, and gives the reader the necessary context. With the increasing digitization of communication and the associated destruction of documentation and development of so-called "hybrid archives," such information is becoming increasingly important. Last but not least, Translation Studies could also benefit from examining the influence of the researcher's motivation and personal socio-cultural background on the choice and processing of the topic, an issue currently being dealt with by historians specializing in composition and rhetoric.

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