

Chile

In brief



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origins


According to the first Spanish settlers, the Inca had named this territory *Chile*. At that time, the majority language was Mapudungun, still spoken today in the south. In the early 19th century, Chile gained independence from the Spanish Crown, which was unable to conquer or colonize the entire territory. Chile's present-day borders have resulted from wars waged in the late 19th century against Peru and Bolivia, in the north, and against the southern Mapuche, an indigenous people independent until then. An important recipient of European immigration between the 19th and 20th centuries, Chile currently receives immigrants from neighboring countries and Asia. In the last census, 12% of the population identified as having indigenous heritage.

abstract


Panorama of translation in Chile from a socio-historic perspective that combines translation studies and intellectual history. During the colonial period (16th-19th centuries), due to its geopolitical situation, settlement conditions, and extended wars against the Mapuche indigenous people, Chile's lettered population and production was quite limited. On the other hand, these same conditions make Chile a singular case for studying European-Indigenous diplomacy and linguistic mediation. The Independence process, the influence of revolutionary ideas from France and the United States, liberalism and positivism, literary romanticism, as well as classical culture and the Republican values it implied, constitute another scene in which Chile, like other Hispanic American nations, translated and adapted foreign works to its culture and society throughout the 19th century. As an axis of innovation, translation was situated at the center of the literary system until the end of the 19th century. Certain scholars thus displayed interest in studying the primary autochthonous language, Mapudungun, which gave rise to ethnographic translation and the first manifestations of resistance to these scientific representations, also by means of translation and heterolinguistic practices. As

the 20th century progressed, translation shifted to the margins of the literary system, abandoning 19th-century ideals so as to follow the dynamics of different political and social scenarios throughout the rest of the century and into the present.

 **record**

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Entry



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Introduction: The linguistic landscape of Chile

In their southern expansion during the second half of the 15th century, the Incas occupied the northern and central areas of present-day Chile. Therefore, by the time the Spanish colonists arrived, the Andean languages, [Quechua](#) and [Aymara](#), coexisted with a variety of local languages, some of which are now extinct while others currently risk extinction. The most widespread indigenous language, [Mapudungun](#), has survived into the present, primarily spoken in southern Chile and part of southern Argentina.

The demographic consequences of the Spanish Conquest completely rearranged the linguistic landscape. On the one hand, forced displacements caused by war eradicated Mapudungun from the central region. On the other hand, indigenous manual laborers from the region of Cuyo, who spoke [Allentiac and Millcayac](#), were brought to work on haciendas around Santiago—though these languages disappeared over time, they are described in records from the 17th century. Mapudungun remained strong in the unconquered south and initiated an expansion toward the Argentine pampas, due to commercial dynamics generated by the military presence in what was called the [Arauco Frontier](#) and, in the second half of the 19th century, as the result of persecutions during the Chilean campaigns of [occupation](#).

During the Republican era, Chile actively encouraged European immigration of intellectuals for educational, scientific, and technical institutions, as well as agricultural workers to settle the lands which had been stripped from the [Mapuche](#) south

of the border. For a time, in big and small cities, a certain degree of cosmopolitanism could be observed, but Spanish eventually became the predominant language.

The elite of Santiago, Valparaíso, and Concepción learned French, English, and German in school and spaces of sociability. Greek and Latin were also conserved as languages of study and translation.

At the present moment, English is the primary foreign language, while the other European languages have declined in practice and study. The languages of current immigrants (Korean, Chinese, Haitian Creole) do not receive State support or public visibility. By contrast, Mapudungun, despite receiving little government support, is undergoing an interesting process of revitalization, led by native speakers; it is also a language of translation.

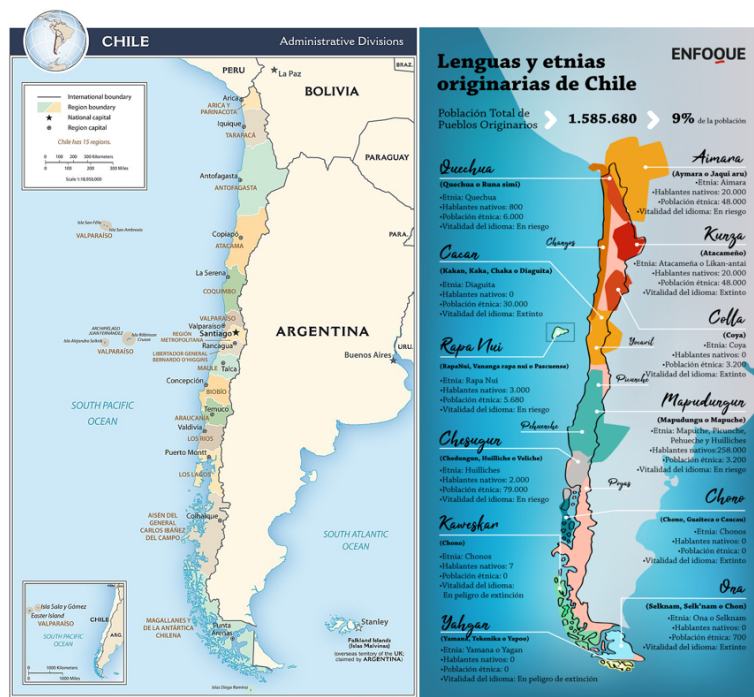
The socio-historic study of texts, contexts, discourses, agents, and acts of translation and interpretation, of which we provide a brief synthesis, constitute a point of observation that allows us to comprehend not only the variety of languages, but also intercultural relations, cultural transformations, the construction of identities and alterities, and the circulation of ideas.

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📄 Translation and colonial literature: 16th-18th centuries

The conquest of Chile required a huge military effort that was obstructed by indigenous resistance and offered little financial compensation for the Spanish monarchy. This condition, and the geographical distance to the metropolis and other large colonial centers, including Lima, which provided administrative dependence, made Chile a culturally peripheral region, with few urban settlements, no printing press, and, therefore, scarce writing culture.

On the other hand, the fact that the Spanish army was unable to conquer the entire territory entailed establishing a border along the Biobío river, some 400 kilometers south of the capital, Santiago. With the military –but also cultural and linguistic– border, the dynamics of trade and mediation guaranteed relative peace, the [transit of merchandise](#), a tentative missionary presence, and the periodic exchange of captives from each side. Hispanic-Mapuche conferences known as



Political map and distribution of languages in Chile.

Parlamentos, organized regularly with a large entourage and the presence of formal interpreters, became true examples of indigenous diplomacy, resulting in treaties that implicated generations of both Spanish and Mapuche for over 250 years (Dillehay, Zavala & Payàs 2020).

During the colonial period, published translations of what was then called the Language of Chile, today Mapudungun, can be grouped into a handful of works, all by Jesuit missionaries: the *Arte de la Lengua de Chile* (Lima, 1606) and the *Sermón en Lengua de Chile* (1621) by Luis de Valdivia (1561-1642), *Arte de la Lengua del Reino de Chile* (Lima, 1765) by Andrés Febrés (1732-1790), and *Chilidugu* (Münster, 1777) by Bernardo de Havestadt (1714-1781). These are compendiums of grammatical, lexicographic, and doctrinal material. The works by Febrés and Havestadt, from the later colonial period, correspond to the Enlightenment trends of their time and include ethnographic and ethnolinguistic information, such as examples of autochthonous discourses. The first two use Spanish as the language of description, while Havestadt's work, published in Germany after the Jesuit expulsion (1767) and, therefore, not intended for missionary use in Chile, was written in Latin. Logically, the translations of the first two are between Spanish and Mapudungun, while Havestadt's work mediates between Latin and Mapudungun.

Although the translatory status of Latin in the Americas can be debated, it is impossible to disassociate this language from translatio imperii, which legitimized cultural transfer from Europe to the New World and imposed intellectual, literary, and aesthetic models. Aside from religious texts, schoolwork, seminaries, catechisms, and liturgy, Latin in colonial Chile produced primarily unpublished philosophical and legal works (legal compendiums and commentaries), as well as numerous unpublished university texts, such as dissertations, theses, academic competitions, etc. (Hanisch 1991). The panorama of Latin is completed by several odes and epigrams, and Jesuit correspondence and writings, partially published in Europe.

Latin, as a model for elaborating the Arts or grammar of indigenous American languages, had an indisputable role in translation. Latin replaced the epistemological bases of these languages: the internal categories and logic of Latin served to provide a form for autochthonous languages and prepare them for the function of translating the language and their content into Spanish. Ideologically, Latin was the third or intermediary language that determined the equidistance and possibilities of mutual intelligibility between Spanish and Mapudungun.



Parlamento of Negrete, 1793. The height of Hispanic-Indigenous Diplomacy. [Source](#).

The participation of clerics in Hispanic-indigenous diplomacy can be traced in translation practices. A missionary who attended the *parlamentos* as a mediator took notes of the formulas employed in the negotiations, which compose part of the bilingual glossary later published by Febrés in his *Arte* of 1765. Linguistic knowledge constructed by *in situ* interpreters was thus recorded. As documented in the proceedings of the more than 30 major Hispanic-Mapuche parlamentos which took place between 1598 and 1803, every meeting began with a solemn oath of the military

interpreters and missionaries in charge of verifying and guaranteeing the veracity of information. These acts and reports were written in Spanish, but no version exists in Mapudungun. The agreements were formalized by word of mouth and sealed with military rituals and animal sacrifices.

The *parlamento* was a hybrid institution in its conception and composition. It derived from indigenous assemblies or parleys called *koyagtun* and was recognized by the Spanish Crown as a diplomatic event. In the proceedings of these summit meetings, one can observe forms of negotiation, consensus-building strategies, discursive styles, and a terminology prepared and carried out with the participation of a body of fully formalized mediators, composed of interpreters and captains “of friendly Indians” (*capitanes de amigos*) supervised by a bilingual officer in charge of relations with indigenous peoples, known as a Commissary of Indian Nations (*Comisario de Naciones*).

Parlamentos did not fall into disuse with Chile’s independence in the early 19th century. The [Wars of Independence](#) were prolonged as civil wars between Chileans and Mapuche, given that a significant part of the indigenous *cacicazgos* (chieftainships) remained loyal to their former allies, the Spanish. For the Mapuche, the wars resulted in the loss of territories, but each advancement made by the Chilean military had to be settled through a *parlamento*. Although these meetings were no longer occasions of negotiation *inter pares*, the Mapuche continued to demand the use of interpreters. Until the beginning of the 20th century, no official agreement with the Mapuche could be made in the [Araucanía](#) without the presence of an interpreter. Interpreters, in whatever degree of formalization, are indicative of the sociolinguistic changes in indigenous society throughout this period.

Mapudungun, in short, did not enter Chilean literature during the colonial period (except in the missionary genre) or during the Independence movements. It wasn’t until the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries when indigenous intellectuals began to make use of written translation.

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¶ Translation at the center of the literary system: the press and Independence

During the Spanish monarchy’s crisis and the cycle of Atlantic revolutions, translation was not only a means of transmission, reception, and influence, but also a method for interaction and appropriation of texts (Stockhorst 2010). Translation thus consisted of a political action which sought concrete effects in the context of revolutionary struggle, in discussions over the type of government that would most benefit independent nations, and, later, in debates within the newly formed republics.

The long-awaited arrival of the [printing press](#), in 1811, formed part of the project led by pro-independence revolutionaries. This technology inaugurated the Chilean press and public sphere, providing a platform for the country’s first translations. These texts were first published in [La Aurora de Chile](#) in 1812 and later in the [Monitor Araucano](#) (1813-

1814) and the *Semanario Republicano* (1813-1814), all newspapers founded and directed by Camilo Henríquez (1769-1825), a literate patriot who advocated for Independence and the founding of the Republic. In the first issue of *La Aurora*, he wrote: “the editor of the Aurora, inspired by the fervent desire to please the public and satisfy the confidence of our fatherland, declares that he has studied English, and in the period of less than a month, is ready to assume the task of translating British and American newspapers” (1812). He translated and adapted fragments from texts on political philosophy, economy, and education in order to circulate the political ideas that legitimized revolutionary and republican causes, as well as to educate citizens on republican principles and thus shape public opinion. Of these translations, some of the most prominent include fragments of John Milton’s *Areopagitica* and Languet’s pamphlet *Vindicia contra tyrannos*.

In 1812, Santiago, with 50,000 inhabitants, only had seven schools. The Instituto Nacional, founded in 1813, became the main establishment for secondary and higher education. Once Chile gained independence from Spain, the press shifted its attention to high modern culture a fundamental aspect of the republican project, for the literary class was convinced that accessing Enlightenment ideas was the only way of overcoming educational, political, and economic underdevelopment. Translation was, therefore, a central element in the efforts of publicists to circulate not only political, but also scientific, philosophical, and economic ideas, as well as practical knowledge. In this sense, abandoning Latin as a *lingua franca* of knowledge and adopting the so-called vulgar languages to write scholarly works, in addition to “the custom that nations have embraced of translating all works from antiquity and important modern writers,” would allow Hispanic America to access and become part of the Republic of Letters (Henríquez 1813). Therefore, translation in 19th-century Chile, and particularly during this first period, occupies the center of the literary system through its social and political function. At the same time, it allows for innovation by providing the printing press with new material in an environment that still lacked original production.



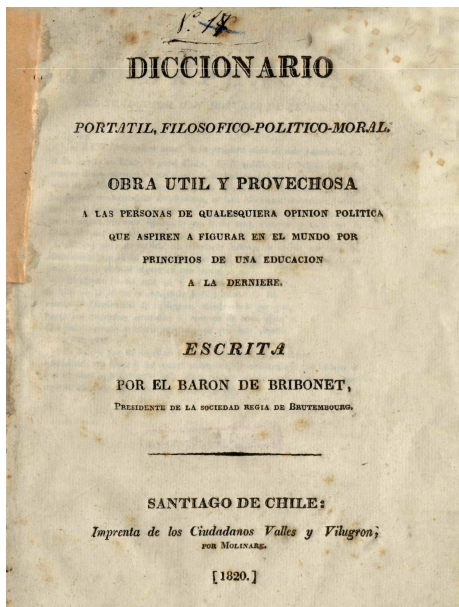
Chile's first newspaper. La Aurora de Chile. 1812.

As for the languages of translation in these first years of press development, it is important to recognize that in Hispanic America, near the end of the colonial period and beginning of the Republican era, Latin remained the language of instruction in primary schools and universities. In Chile, the clergy, literate, and civil servants formed a cohort whose cultural entity was modeled by Latin, rooted in the classical and humanist tradition. This explains the presence of translations of excerpts from the works of Virgil and Cicero, among other Latin authors, in the country’s first newspaper. Both authors were used as emblems to publicize the republican project (Gazmuri 2016).

In these years, English—more than French—was the preferred language of the “literate patriots,” due partly to the influence of Anglo-American models of government on early Hispanic American Republicans, London’s centrality as a common destination for many exiled intellectuals from Spain and the Americas, and the presence of U.S. diplomatic agents in Hispanic America during the

decades of 1810 and 1820 (Bastin [2003](#); Stockhorst 2010). In the 1820s, a group of these literate exiles from various backgrounds arrived in Chile: the Venezuelan [Andrés Bello](#) (1781-1865), the Spaniard [José Joaquín de Mora](#) (1783-1864), and the Colombian [Juan García del Río](#) (1794-1856). In their relatively prolonged layover in London, they had acquired editorial and translation experience in the Spanish-language magazines which they edited (Racine 2010). All of them contributed to the development of the Chilean press.

Books were a scarce asset during the decade of 1820. The National Library had only been founded in 1813 and the creation of its catalogue relied on a “patriotic subscription” to supply books. This lack of resources was aggravated by problems of selection and translation: according to minister plenipotentiary in London, [Mariano Egaña](#) (1793-1846), European merchants would send defective translations of irrelevant works to Hispanic America (Egaña [1948](#): 303). Creoles complained that Europe ignored the potential book market in Hispanic America, especially of good translations.



In this scenario of the late 1820s, a new kind of periodical publication emerged with the objective of disseminating literary, philosophical, and scientific knowledge. Without completely severing ties with current political affairs, these weeklies anticipated the literary, scientific, pedagogical magazines which proliferated as of 1840. Translation had played an important role in the first periodicals, which published translations of foreign news and versions of excerpts of political works. These new periodicals, dedicated to the propagation of specific knowledge, gave preference to publishing compendiums and summaries, instead of integral translations. Some combined news of current affairs with articles on issues of public interest (from legislative systems to practical knowledge) while others eliminated news sections altogether. Regardless, most of the translations did not

First Chilean translation, according to the Biblioteca Chilena de Traductores 1820-1924. Pseudotranslation.

provide literal versions, rather adaptations, condensed or fragmented versions. This strategy was characteristic of [El Mercurio de Chile](#) (1822), edited by Camilo Henríquez, and [El Mercurio Chileno](#) (1828-1829 - [Vol. 1](#) & [Vol. 2](#)), printed by José Joaquín de Mora. The decade of 1820 was, in this sense, a

period which anticipated the place that translation would have in the book industry beginning in the 1840s. Specialized periodicals, such as [El redactor de la educación](#) (1828), organ of the Society of Students for Learning and Propagating New Methods, founded in 1825 by French scientist [Carlos Ambrosio Lozier](#) (1784-1865) and dedicated to the advancement of sciences, were sustained by translation. In fact, in its Regulations, the Society established “the translation and printing of elemental books or parts of works for teaching children” as one of its primary interests.

Translation in this period, understood as an activity carried out by people of letters, was committed to the principles of the time, which converged in the movement for intellectual, moral, and social emancipation, and coincided with the foundational

initiatives of major republican institutions while debating conservative thought. These characteristics generated an ambiguity in regard to the definition of translation as a product, strengthened to the point where it was confused with or replaced the original production, a trait that would become common in the following decades. This confusion or collusion is expressed in different ways, such as anonymous authorship. Many translations in periodicals were printed without the author's name. Pseudotranslation was another method which we can observe in the unique example of the *Diccionario portátil, filosófico, político y moral*, by one Baron of Bribonet, from a Royal Society of Brutemburg, a brief pamphlet, pastiche of Voltaire's *Dictionnaire portative* (Bribonnet [1820](#)). This flyer, published by "Citizens Valles and Vilugrón," owners of one of the country's first printing presses, appears as the first Chilean translation in [José Toribio Medina's](#) catalogue [Biblioteca Chilena de Traductores 1820-1924](#).

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¶ Translation in the center of the literary system: the construction of a national culture (1830-1900)

In 1925, José Toribio Medina (1852-1930), bibliographer and primary documentalist of the history of books and printing in the Americas, published this repertoire, which contains 1,643 titles of translations (including reeditions). Although limited to books, and, as with all catalogues, it contains gaps and omissions, this work allows us to comprehend the universe of translation in an important moment of Chile's intellectual history—the period of building national culture, following the definitive independence from Spain (1826). In retrospect, Chile propelled a "modernist" model of nationalism: as opposed to other republics, such as Mexico and Peru, which assumed their place as inheritors of an indigenous past, Chile turned its back on both the colonial and pre-Columbian legacies, associating independence with its birth as a modern nation. Therefore, the country promoted the importation of educative, governmental, aesthetic, and literary models from France, England, Germany, and the United States, and invited intellectuals and academics from these countries to reside and work in Chile. On the other hand, near the middle of the century, during a time of political aperture, Chile provided asylum to important Latin American liberals, infused with French revolutionary ideas, partly disseminated through translation. Santiago also acquired a French style in its social and literary tastes (González Errázuriz 2003). The relationship between Chile and England, the result of their naval history and the importance of Valparaíso and Concepción as mercantile ports of the Pacific until the construction of the Panama Canal (1901), also explains the existence of a British community, along with its religious culture and even English-language newspapers. Between 1842 and 1850, Chile printed the most out of all South American countries and, as of 1844, no fewer than ten translations were printed per year, approximately 10% of all printed books (Subercaseaux 2010). The translators of this period introduced 19th-century Enlightenment and liberal positivism, they were polemicists and pillars of major educational institutions, the creators of the first scientific magazines and promoters of the press, aside from holding high political offices in several cases.

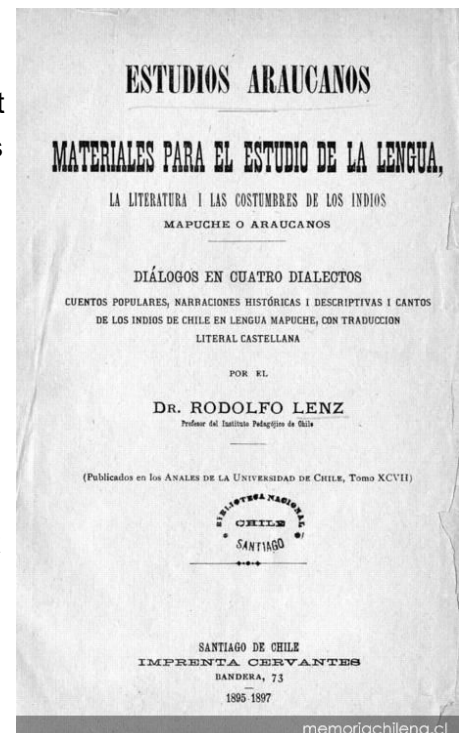
The indigenous culture, Mapuche or Araucan, which had been present in the pro-independence imaginary due to its resistance to the Spanish conquest and steadfast territorial defense, was gradually displaced toward the spaces of ethnography and folklore. Mapudungun was declared a nearly extinct language and the Mapuche were ruled incompatible with progress (Payàs, Mora & Sambolin 2020). In short, if we take translation as a parameter for the relations of alterity, Chile developed major activity on the front of external alterity, with a notable translation production from European languages, while on the front of internal alterity, represented by its own indigenous universe, translation was circumscribed within the limits of positive science, representing racial hierarchies imposed by the evolutionism of the period.

Translation and educational mission

The 19th-century founding fathers of education set goals to boost the population's literacy and provide reading material. The 1830s were characterized by a climate of relative political openness which turned Chile into an asylum for progressive intellectuals persecuted in other Hispanic American countries (although several of Chile's own were also exiled). Thus, the country received the Argentinian [Domingo Faustino Sarmiento](#) (1811-1888) and Venezuelan [Andrés Bello](#) (1781-1865), among other intellectuals and politicians who, together with Chileans, constituted a foundational generation for cultural production. Translation was part of this militancy, which extended throughout Spanish-speaking America, in need of—as many proclaimed—translations adapted to the national spirit and needs (Poblete 2013). As Bello would say, foreign works must be adapted, performing “calculated alterations for the circumstances of our country.” Translation was applied to the educational mission: “It is not children we must educate, it is nations,” Sarmiento proclaimed, for “we will never educate [...] by merely teaching people to read, if we do not remove the primary obstacle, which consists of not having in our language [...] books that contain useful and practical notions” (Payàs 2018). As of 1840, with the emergence of new printing presses and the impulse of periodicals, translation developed free and ethnocentric practices, favoring the social and pedagogical over the literary dimensions of writing.

Bello and Sarmiento were also the authors and propagators of a [Spanish orthography for Hispanic America](#), which was distributed through translations for schools, in the press, and in scientific institutions until the beginning of the 20th century. This way, translation would also contribute to the debate surrounding a Standard American Spanish.

The demand for books in [the educational sector](#) propelled multiple adaptations and translations. With the foundation of the [University of Chile](#) in 1842 and a network of elementary and high schools, translation, frequently commissioned by the government, came to fill the empty spaces left in school libraries after the political regime shifted from Catholic monarchy to Republic. The diversity of works published at this time was enormous: primary school manuals, such as *La conciencia de un niño*

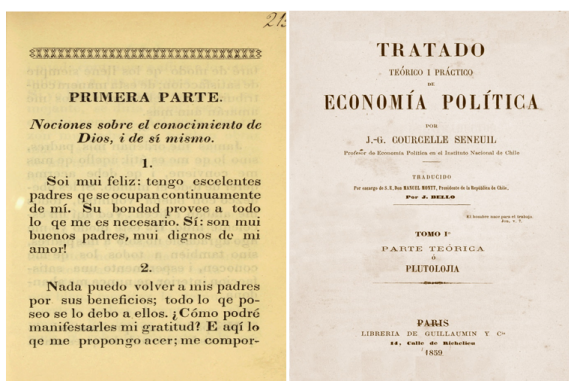


Ethnographic translation in the foundational work of Araucan studies.

(1844), translated by Sarmiento from an anonymous French author; books for higher grades and technical schools, such as the *Curso elemental de Agricultura para el uso de los Colegios y escuelas populares* (1853), translated from the English by [Francisco S. Astaburuaga](#) (1817-1892); and major treatises that contributed to the modernization of the State and administration, such as J. G. Courcelle-Seneuil's *Economía Política*, translated by one of Andrés Bello's sons, [Juan Bello Dunn](#) (1825-1860) ([Vol. I](#) and [Vol. II](#)). There was no shortage of translations for the common education of citizens: Luis Figuier's *Exposición é historia de los Descubrimiento modernos* of 1854, translated by Sarmiento, who explains having ruled out "explanatory notes and documents, as well as meticulous details of little interest for the American reader" [sic], or *El libro de las madres i de las preceptoras*, in translation by the Spaniard [Rafael Minvielle](#) (1800-1887), who specifies that the text was, "Translated from French and adapted to our customs and beliefs." Other works include *Manual de pedagogía* (1887), *Compendio de la historia de América* (1875), *Historia antigua* (1854), Lamartine's biographies of Cardinals Richelieu and Mazarino, and Admiral Nelson, and Guizot's *El Conquistador* (1856), as well as books on the lives of saints and scholastic compendiums of sacred history.

Translation and literary society

Newspapers were one of the primary platforms that expressed a yearning for European literature. Translations of French novels *à la mode* inspired the creation of [newspaper supplements](#), but articles and excerpts of books were also translated and published in many periodicals which circulated with varying degrees of success throughout the 19th century. In 1872, seventeen newspapers (dailies, weeklies, and sporadic publications) circulated throughout Santiago and Valparaíso published seven, including two English-language and one German-language periodicals. Translation was especially relevant in the literary presses that emerged from the movement known as the [Literary Generation of 1842](#), founded by liberal Chilean politician [José Victorino Lastarria](#) (1817-1888), who considered Bello and Sarmiento as mentors (Pinilla 1943). Thus, translations or "imitations" of a significant number of European works were published in *El Semanario de Santiago* (1842-1843), *El Crepúsculo* (1843-1844) or the *Revista de Santiago* (1848-1855).



Bello's orthography propagated through translation: Left: Page of La conciencia de un niño (The Consciousness of a Child), unknown original, translated for primary

The universe of newspaper translators was quite diverse: Clara Álvarez Condarco (1825-1865), born in London, was in charge of the English-language version of the newspapers *Precio Corriente del Mercurio* and *El Mercurio del Vapor*, and developed a significant trajectory as a translator of English works for the literary supplement of *El Mercurio de Valparaíso*. In this same newspaper, during the last decades of the century, writer [Eduardo Poirier](#) (1860-1931) and former typographer Tomás Julio González (1843-1908) worked as translators of serialized novels. In Santiago, [Alcibiades Roldán](#) (1859-1947), professor, lawyer and later minister, translated for *El Ferrocarril*, a newspaper founded in 1855. The journalism career for conservative politician [Máximo Ramón Lira](#) (1846-

schools. Right: Translation of a treatise on political economy for higher education. 1916) began with the translation of novels, also for newspapers. According to Silva Castro, “he would walk into the offices of *El Independiente*, in one hand carrying a translation, in the other tomorrow’s secrets” (Silva [1958](#): 239). [Carlos Morla Vicuña](#) (1846-1901) combined his diplomatic career with his work as a columnist and translator for the newspaper *La República* and as a translator of novels and poetry, including R. Hyenne’s *Joaquín Murrieta*, *Un bandido chileno en California*, an adaptation of a popular folk legend from the U.S-Mexico border, and Longfellow’s *Evangeline*. In the weekly *La Época*, which, according to Silva Castro, published “the country’s best writers,” translated content was attributed to Roberto Alonso, who Rubén Darío (1867-1916), during his [stay in Chile](#) in the mid 1880s, described as an “exquisite prose writer in charge of translations for the newspaper” (Darío [1934](#): 284). The conservative press used the [Revista Católica](#) as an organ to counter liberal ideas expressed in the translations published in rival magazines.

Andrés Bello’s versions and “imitations” of Victor Hugo, which rendered him an American patriot (Pagni [2004](#)), are some of the most emblematic texts of the period. “[Los fantasmas](#)” and “[A Olimpio](#)” were published in 1842 in the magazine [Museo de Ambas Américas](#), while his imitation of “[Los duendes](#)” was published in the newspaper *El Progreso* in 1843, as well as his well-received translation of “[La oración por todos](#),” published in *El Crepúsculo* in 1843. [José Antonio Soffia](#) (1843-1886) and Rafael Minvielle also took on the task of translating Hugo.

Theater and opera companies contributed to sociability and reading practices that produced important translation activity, both in staging productions and librettos, as well as forming art criticism in the local press. Practically all [opera](#) libretto authors are present in Chilean translations, although many rendered by anonymous translators. Reviews were translated from foreign newspapers such as *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, *The Edinburgh Review*, *Le Globe*, or the *Revue de Paris* for [El Araucano](#), the most important and long-standing Chilean newspaper of the time (1830-1870), which served as a platform for practicing literary translation, primarily of poetry and excerpts of theatrical works. In this newspaper, young politician and writer [Salvador Sanfuentes](#) (1817-1860) published a translation of an excerpt from Rancine’s *Ifigenia en Aulide*. He would go on to translate free versions of Molière’s *Le Cocu imaginaire* and J. F. Marmontel’s *Les Incas*, both published posthumously in [1863](#). Andrés Bello himself translated the drama *Teresa* by Alejandro Dumas (father) (1802-1870), staged in Santiago in 1839, which appeared to have inspired other translations of the same genre:

“Making the most of the theater appeal which in 1840 was inspired by one of the best verse companies to visit our land, we urged the most talented youth to partake in the enterprise of translating for our scene the renowned dramas of French literature, following the example Bello himself had provided” (Lastarria [1878](#): 89).

The author, Lastarria, as one of Bello’s disciples, translated Frédéric Soulié’s *Le Proscrit*. Other translators included Rafael Minvielle, who provided translations of *Hernani*, by Victor Hugo, and

Antony, by Alejandro Dumas (father); as well as Santiago Urzúa (†1852), who translated *Paul Jones*, also by A. Dumas, published in 1846 (Briseño [1965](#): 251).

Although French was the primary foreign language, some writers and liberal Chilean politicians who lived in Germany between 1850 and 1860, published—initially in newspapers or magazines—some of the first Hispanic American versions of the romantics directly from German. This is the case of the brothers [Guillermo Matta](#) (1829-1899) and [Manuel Antonio Matta](#) (1826-1892). The latter, in 1862, translated Schiller's *Guillermo Tell* for the liberal newspaper *La Voz de Chile* and his verse translation of Goethe's *Faust* was released posthumously (1907). [Justo Florian Lobeck](#) (1816-1869), a professor of Greek at the National Institute, published Goethe's *Jerman i Dorotea* in 1868.

19th-century political ideas

The height of periodical publications and editing, the growth of performing arts, and the impulse of government-financed education, along with the creation of libraries and cultural institutions, set the context for the highly influential Generation of 1842 (year in which liberal intellectual Lastarria founded the Sociedad Literaria). The generation's translation activity served to import authors, topics, genres, and styles that were, in general, adapted to the reality of a nation which, in literature, sought to develop its own voice, debating between classicism, Iberian models, *criollismo*, and romanticism. Typical of the time, new forms of sociability such as gatherings, clubs, philanthropic societies, were also spaces in which readings and discussions of political ideas took place. This generation is associated with renowned personalities like Sarmiento and Bello, the Matta brothers, [the Amunátegui brothers](#), Bello's sons (Emilio, Manuel, and Juan), [Hermógenes Irisarri](#) (1819-1886), [Jacinto Chacón](#) (1820-1893), [Diego Barros Arana](#) (1830-1907), Francisco Solano Astaburuaga, and others. The [Sociedad de la Igualdad](#) created by [Francisco Bilbao](#) (1823-1865) in 1850, was one of the major promoters of reformist ideas. Bilbao himself spread the principles of liberty and egalitarianism and the social Christianity of F. de Lamennais through his translations ([La esclavitud moderna](#), 1843; *Traducción nueva de los Evangelios*, 1856), which would earn him excommunication and exile. Taking asylum in Lima, Paris, and Buenos Aires, Bilbao continued to write and translate, sowing ideas of social reform and liberty in each country where he resided. The ideas of historic nationalism, influenced by Lamartine (versions by Jacinto Chacón), Michelet (translation by Juan Bello in 1848), and Guizot (translation by Manuel Bello in 1856), are also expressed in this singular period which, through translations, reveals the course of modern liberal Latin American thought.

While many of the period's illustrious personalities accounted for much of the translation activity, their names often replacing those of the original authors on book covers (such as in the case of *La conciencia de un niño*), there was also an abundance of anonymous translations: some may have been plagiarized, others may have corresponded to translators who, based on the ideas expressed in the works, could not or preferred not to

reveal their names; and yet other times, anonymity served as a means to express a collective voice, as in the case of Bilbao, the “Young Chilean.” Along with female anonymity (“Translated by a young lady” or “Translated by a young Chilean lady”), the presence of women translators in pedagogical or instructional works is an interesting, yet largely ignored phenomenon. Examples include school teacher Carolina Valderrama, who, in 1858, translated several educational texts and, later, *La urbanidad cristiana* (1874); as well as some wives of notable public figures, who were primarily familiar with French, such as [Enriqueta Pinto](#) (1817-1904), the wife of President Bulnes, who translated Abbot Chassay’s *Manual de una mujer cristiana* (1845); and Dolores Olañeta de Contardo, who provided versions of A. Lecler’s *La Condesa de Gloswood*, and Ségur’s *La piedad enseñada a los niños* (1864). The case of [Martina Barros Borgoño](#) (1850-1944) is well known, for this notable intellectual and precursor of liberal feminism, which began taking shape toward the end of the 19th century, rendered the first Spanish-language translation of John Stuart Mill’s *The Subjection of Women* (1869), published as *La esclavitud de la mujer* in volumes II and III of the *Revista de Santiago* between 1872 and 1873.

J. S. Mill’s variety of positivism had an [important reception in Chile](#), thanks to José Victorino Lastarria’s introductory work and political action. This is reflected in the last quarter of the 19th century in several translations of Mill’s books, as well as translations of Jeremy Bentham and Benjamin Constant, although the latter resembles French positivism. Other works in this line of thought include Auguste Comte’s *Principios de filosofía positiva* (1875), the works of Jorge Lagarrigue (1854-1894) in general, which praised conservative positivism, and Émile Littré’s *Opúsculos de filosofía positiva* (1878), in translation by the ideologue of Chilean radicalism [Valentín Letelier](#) (1852-1919). Positivism was also spread through its own newspapers, such as *El Positivista*, *Periódico filosófico, literario, científico y moral* (1886-1889), which regularly included translations.

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¶ A heterogeneous field: from 1900 to the present

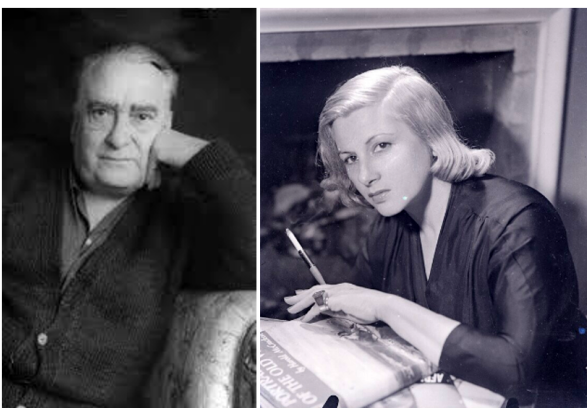
In sociological terms, the political and literary fields eventually disassociated from each other in the 20th century. In the literary field, avant-garde poetics proliferated translation during the first decades of the century. Traveling to Europe formed a part of the itinerary of these author-translators, who synthesized aesthetic modes and literary trends. [Augusto d’Halmar](#) (1882-1950), with his translation of poetry by the French-speaking Lithuanian Lubicz Milosz, would influence an entire generation of poets, among them Neruda. Translation in this period largely responds to literary and artistic affinities, meant to promote contemporary European movements in Chile and inspire new national



Publicity for the day and time when the translation of Lamennais’s work could be acquired. The translator (“A Young Chilean”) was the exiled Francisco Bilbao (1843).

trends. The channels of expression were magazines and newspaper sections like “[Notas de Arte](#)” in *La Nación*. Here, in 1925, [Juan Emar](#) (1893-1964) published the prologue to [Vicente Huidobro’s](#) (1893-1948) famous poem *Altazor*, as a translation from the French, and, in 1924, [Sara Malvar](#) (1894-1970) published her translation of an excerpt of the “Surrealist Manifesto.”

The reception of Surrealism and the European avant-garde through translation is also the result of [Braulio Arenas](#) (1913-1988) and the *Mandrágora* group. Arenas translated André Breton and, in general, introduced many old and contemporary authors. Jorge Onfray (1921-1980), from the same group, translated René Char. In 1928, the magazine *Letras* was founded as a literary stronghold for the anti-*criollista* movement. During its short duration, the magazine published all poets and writers of the new generation, among them [Hernán del Solar](#) (1901-1985), who would become one of the most important translators for local publishing houses in mid-century Chile. A literary critic, anthologizer, author of novels and children’s books, del Solar was the first Spanish-language translator of Thomas Mann and Nikos Kazantzakis (he also translated Zweig, Huxley, Maurois, Cendrars, among others). *Letras* includes texts by authors such as Milosz, Rilke, and Omar Khayam, translated especially for the magazine. [Ángel Cruchaga](#) (1893-1964), one of the magazine’s founders and recipient of the National Prize for Literature in 1948, translated André Maurois in 1937. Of Chile’s four major early 20th-century poets, Vicente Huidobro, [Rosamel del Valle](#) (1901-1965), [Gabriela Mistral](#) (1889-1957), and [Pablo Neruda](#) (1904-1973), only the latter performed significant translations. In addition to his version of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* (1964), considered a classic, Neruda translated Russian and Rumanian poets, resulting from his political affinities and an idea of translation as “a dialogue between comrades” (de Nordenflycht [2012](#)).



Hernán del Solar and Lenka Franulic exemplify the height of the major translation publishing houses in the 20th century.

The first half of the century saw the emergence of vast editorial production for a mass public, with publishing houses like [Zig-Zag](#) (1905), *Ercilla* (1928), and [Nascimento](#) (1917), each with their own unique series. These presses were genuine companies dedicated to offering a wide variety of publications for the growing middle class, not only within the country, but also throughout Hispanic America. The relationship between translation and intellectual militancy diminished while the work of translators gradually became professionalized, a common characteristic of modern translation. In the 1930s and 40s, [Luis Alberto Sánchez](#) (1900-1994), Peruvian intellectual and politician exiled in Chile for many

years, directed the Santiago publishing house Editorial Ercilla, where he published many of his own translations of English, French, and German literature (Rolland, Maurois, Frank, Kazantzakis, Montherlant, Mauriac, Rilke, Joyce, Maritain). Ercilla was the largest publishing house in Chile and

one of the largest in Hispanic America, due to the [publishing boom](#) of the decades of 1930-1950, no doubt the result of the shortage caused by the Spanish Civil War, but also by the restrictions on imported books. In order to meet the demand, Sánchez formed a team of translators with other Peruvian exiles: [Ciro Alegría](#), [Manuel Seoane](#), [Ernesto Lizárraga](#), and [Alberto Hidalgo](#). Local writers also participated, such as the notable journalist [Lenka Franulic](#) (1908-1961), who translated *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), as well as works by Thomas Mann and John Steinbeck. Franulic also published important critical works and eventually received the National Prize for Journalism in 1957.

With the end of the Spanish Civil War, Spain's rigorous policies to foment the publishing industry placed the country at the head of Spanish-language publishing and, in Chile, editorial activity diminished significantly near the late 1950s. Ercilla was acquired by the Zig-Zag publishing house in the 1960s, a decade when translation remained an important activity and women translators appeared more regularly. [Estela Lorca de Rojo](#) (1918-2012) and Lina Larraín del Campo were among some of the professional translators who worked assiduously for Zig-Zag (with translations of West, Greene, Bernanos, and Troyat).

An important beacon for literary translation in these years developed around [Trilce](#), a magazine that brought together young poet translators from the Generation of 1960, such as [Waldo Rojas](#) (b. 1944, translated D. Thomas and W. B. Yeats), [Omar Lara](#) (b. 1941), [Walter Hoefler](#) (b. 1944), and [Armando Uribe](#) (1933-2020). The magazine also attracted poets from the [Literary Generation of 1950](#), some of whom were notable translators, such as [Miguel Arteche](#) (1926), National Prize of Literature in 1996, translator of Twain, Verne, Cooper, Collins, and Frost, as well as [Jorge Teillier](#) (1935-1996), translator of Breton, Larbaud, Char, and anthologist—together with [Armando Roa Vial](#) (b. 1966)—of *Poesía universal traducida por poetas chilenos* (1996). Currently, Roa is recognized as one of the best translators and experts on medieval and modern English poetry, particularly R. Browning and E. Pound.

In the first half of the century, Chilean-German priest [Guillermo Jünemann](#) (1855-1938) was a prominent translator of classics, publishing his Spanish-language translations of the *Iliad* (1902), as well as various anthologies of world literature. Though little known, his Bible translation directly from the *Septuagint* version was eventually published posthumously. Presbyterian Hellenist [Juan Rafael Salas Errázuriz](#) (1855-1921) is renowned today for his translations of Horace, Virgil, and the *Oresteia* and *Prometheus Bound* by [Aeschylus](#) (1904). In 1937, [Egidio Poblete](#) (1868-1940) published his hendecasyllabic version of Virgil's *Aeneid*, which critics consider one of Chile's greatest contributions to classical studies.

Arabic migrations to Chile at the end of the 19th century heavily influenced the country's cultural production. Prominent within this context was [Benedicto Chuaqui](#) (1895-1970), a writer of Syrian origin, belonging to the so-called [Generation of 27](#), considered to have integrated Arabic and Chilean cultural traditions. Chuaqui translated, primarily, an anthology of ancient and modern Arabic poetry (1945) and Gibrán Jalil Gibrán's *Pensamientos* (1942).

Continuing with the evolution of publishing houses, by the time [Salvador Allende](#) (1908-1973) was elected president in 1970, Zig-Zag had split into two factions, following a worker strike that same year. One part was acquired by the government and turned into a publishing house under the name [Quimantú](#), aimed at the massive promotion of reading in the internal market. Its purpose was to disseminate universal classics in low-cost large print runs to democratize literary culture. Gorki, Hemingway, Melville, Salgari, Conrad, London, Lagerlof, Verne, Wilde, Zweig, Twain, Poe, Hamsum, Maugham, Maupassant, Gogol, Andersen, and the Brothers Grimm are some of the authors that formed part of this crusade. The names of the translators are not included in most of these editions, except in specific cases, such as that of Martin Bruggendieck, whose version of Kafka's (1972) *Metamorphosis* is still reprinted today. Considering the circumstances and this publishing house's goals, some of the translations may have been published based on existing editions.

In these years of growth, universities also implemented important editorial work. The Universidad de Chile's press ([Editorial Universitaria](#)) published Genaro Godoy's (1909-1979) translations of Greek classics: the *Antigone* by Sophocles (1971), *The Knights* by Aristophanes (1971), and a selection of work by Plato (*El camino de la cicuta*, 1974). With this press, playwright [Eugenio Dittborn](#) (1915-1979) also published his versions of Molière, which renovated the national theater landscape.



Quimantú: "When books were as accessible as cigarettes" (Source)

After the coup d'état of 1973 and the ensuing dictatorship, a symptomatic silence fell over the publishing industry for several years. Censorship placed restrictions on published material and translation activity practically stopped altogether until 1980. However, in the last quarter of the 20th century, the editorial scene diversified. The general public was supplied by Zig-Zag, which printed a youth version of the *Iliad*, edited by novelist [Manuel Rojas](#) (1896-1973), and Editorial Andrés Bello, where [Hernán Poblete Varas](#) (1919-2010) published Dickens, Alcott, and other youth classics. In other cases, classic translations have been reedited, such as those by the Arteché marriage in the 1950s and 60s (Dickens, Verne, Orwell, and Camus). The work of [Alicia Morel](#) (1921-2017) is also influential during this period, with her translation of Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, published by Zig-Zag in 1981. This translation has become the most popular version throughout Hispanic America.

After her return from exile, Cristina Varas Largo (1968) published a variety of translations of Russian novelists, such as *El crimen de la actriz Maryskina; y otros cuentos* by Arcady Averchenko (2010), and *Sonechka* by Ludmila Ulitskaya (2005). Under the same circumstances, poet Omar Lara was awarded for his translations of Rumanian poets. From his studies in Beijing and eventual diplomatic work, [Luis Enrique Délano](#) (1907-1985), who was exiled in Mexico, is known for his version of the *Poemas de Li Bai* (1962) and translations of other Chinese authors, as well as Gorki. As for Chilean

translators living abroad, [Adán Kovacsics](#) (b. 1953), a naturalized Spaniard, has been awarded several times for his translations of Austrian and Hungarian literature, in particular that of Imre Kertész.

In the field of philosophy and [classical studies](#), Editorial Universitaria has reprinted Genaro Godoy's versions and published Aristotle's *The Categories* (1988), in translation by María Isabel Flisfisch and [Humberto Giannini](#) (1927-2014). Óscar Velázquez (b. 1939), awarded the [Universidad Católica's Translation Prize 2019](#), has published his annotated versions of Plato and other classics. In 1988, a new version of the *Iliad* was released, translated by Gabriela Andrade and María Luisa Vial. Along with [Antonio Arbea](#) (b. 1943), translator of Latin, [Leonardo Sanhueza](#) (b. 1974), [Juan Cristóbal Romero](#) (b. 1974), [Kurt Folch](#) (b. 1970), [Roberto Torretti](#) (b. 1930), and [Miguel Castillo Didier](#) (b. 1934) form part of the group of Chilean translators whom Ediciones Tácitas has commissioned for its collection of classic and modern translations. Castillo Didier is a reference in the Hispanic world for his translations of Kavafis, Elitis, and Kazantzakis.

Also in [philosophy](#), Patricio Marchant (1939-1990) set a precedent with his translation of Jacques Derrida's *Tiempo y presencia* (1971), inaugurating an area of translation production that would include Spinoza's *Tractatus* (1990), translated by Flisfisch and Giannini, and St. Thomas Aquinas's *De veritate* (1996), translated by Giannini and O. Velázquez. Philosopher [Pablo Oyarzún](#) (b. 1950) has provided versions of Immanuel Kant, P. Celan, and Walter Benjamin, while [Jorge Eduardo Rivera](#) (1927-2017) published the second Spanish-language translation of Heidegger's *Being and Time* (2015). The influence of Heidegger in the development of Chilean philosophy is reflected in other translations: *El origen de la obra de arte* (1976), by R. Kay, and the anthology *La técnica en Heidegger* (2 vols. 2006 and 2007), prepared by [Eduardo Sabrovsky](#) (b. 1949); [Breno Onetto](#) (b. 1960) has also translated Heidegger, Hegel, and Czech intellectual Vilém Flusser. Philosopher [María Emilia Tijoux](#) translated Jacques Rancière's *El viraje ético de la estética y la política* (2005) and *Política, policía, democracia* (2006).

An inexhaustible quarry of [translations](#), Shakespearian drama has provided much source material for Chilean translators. Aside from Neruda's version of *Romeo and Juliet*, [Juan Cariola Larraín](#) (1903-1981) has published many Shakespearian renderings which circulated during the mid-20th century. Likewise, four Chilean writers participated in an ambitious collection for Editorial Norma, titled *Shakespeare por escritores*: Alejandra Rojas (b. 1958) translated *Julius Caesar* (1999), [Jaime Collyer](#) (b. 1955) rendered *Othello* (2000), [Germán Carrasco](#) (b. 1971) delivered a version of *The Merchant of Venice* (2000), and Armando Roa (b. 1966) translated *Macbeth* (2001). Outside of this project, [Nicanor Parra's](#) (1914-2018) celebrated free version of *King Lear*, titled *Lear, Rey y Mendigo*, was written for the stage in 1992 and eventually published in 2004. Translations of Shakespeare have also been present during the first decades of the 20th century through the work of [Braulio Fernández Biggs](#) (b. 1967) and [Paula Baldwin Lind](#), specialists in English literature, who, in 2010, published new translations of *The Tempest* and, in 2014, *Twelfth Night*, both with Editorial Universitaria.

Literary translation by authors themselves has experimented a considerable rise in the last several years. Currently, various renowned [poets](#) from different generations have turned translation into a field for experimentation. [Verónica Zondek](#) (b. 1953) has translated Walcott, Carson, Sexton, Stein, Benn, and Dickinson (with E. Winter and R. Olavarría). Armando Roa Vial (b. 1966), on the other

hand, is known as one of the best translators and experts on medieval and modern English poetry, in particular Rexroth, Browning, Pound, and Shakespeare, and critics have lauded his translation of *Beowulf* (2010). In terms of US poetry, [Rodrigo Olavarría](#) (b. 1979) and [Enrique Winter](#) (b. 1982) stand out. [Andrés Anwandter](#) (b. 1974) has translated Valerio Magrelli, Mark Strand, and inaugurated, with a translation of [David Antin's](#) (1932-2016) *Talk-Poems*, the collection “Caballo de Proa,” devoted to authors who translate other authors; in prose, Anwandter also translated Rebecca Solnit's *Wanderlust: una historia del caminar* (2015), published by Hueders, a press that has sought to invigorate the national literary field with new translations. With this editorial project, [Pedro Vicuña](#) (b. 1956) has published his version of Euripides's *The Suppliants* (2013). [Carlos Henrickson](#) (b. 1974) has translated, from the Russian, poetry by Marina Tzvetayeva (1974) and, from the French, short stories by Perrault (2013).

Systematic reflections on translation have also occupied spaces in several independent and university publishing houses, such as [Mimesis](#) and [Ediciones UDP](#), and Chile has been the host of various congresses on translation and translation studies in the last couple of years. The [Universidad Católica awards a yearly Translation Prize](#) in recognition of distinguished translators and the [Ministry of Culture's yearly Translation Grant](#) has financed an important number of projects that constitute the current field of Chilean literary translation.

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¶ Translation between Spanish and Mapudungun



Mapuche poetry, part of the Chilean literary canon.

Beginning in 1930, [poetry](#) has served as the main literary genre to preserve and explore Mapudungun, the language of the Mapuche people. While periodization of this phenomenon has considered Anselmo Quilaleo's *Cancionero araucano* (1939) an inaugural work, as of 1966, with the publication of Sebastián Queupul's anthology *Poemas mapuche en castellano*, a significant portion of Mapuche poetry has been published in bilingual editions, whether through allograph translation or self-translation (Stocco 2018), and heterolingual editions (Grutman 1997). Although [Elicura Chihuailaf](#) (b. 1952) (National Prize for Literature 2020), [Leonel Lienlaf](#) (b. 1969), [María Isabel Lara Millapán](#) (b. 1979), and [Jaime Huenún](#) (b. 1967) are individualized as central poets in this production, a number of other authors share conflictive positions with Spanish, thus exposing their problematic relationship with translation. Their heterolingual strategies are the creative reflection of an intercultural reality, indigenous insubordination, and the subsistence of orality in the process of textual construction.

Far from circulating on the margins of society, Mapuche poetry has been embraced as representative of national literature, and frequently appears in anthologies of Chilean poetry. Other prominent Mapuche poets include [Roxana Miranda Rupailaf](#) (b. 1982), [Adriana Paredes Pinda](#) (b.

1970), [Bernardo Colipán](#) (b. 1967), [David Añiñir](#) (b. 1971), [María Teresa Panchillo Nekulwual](#) (b. 1958), and a constellation of younger writers. This production has inspired critical studies of interest. The notions of authorship regarding the original and the translation, as well as questions brought up by the translation's directionality in these cases, form part of the current debates on the topic.

In recent years, some Mapuche intellectuals have taken on translations or retranslations of oral texts recovered by ethnographers and missionaries from the 19th century, in line with revisionist historiography. The figure of intellectual and politician [Manuel Manquilef](#) (1887-1950) is currently being vindicated for his work as an informant, translator, and interpreter of ethnographies and, later, as writer, translator, and self-translator, whose work reveals the conflicts between linguistic ideologies (Payàs, Ortiz & Sambolin 2021). Likewise, Mapudungun-Spanish interpretation in the areas of contact with the State has received much attention, in light of the demands for official recognition of the language.

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Research potencial

In general, within the academic field a large potential exists for developing the still incipient dialogue between translation practice-translation studies and other disciplines of the social sciences and humanities. Historiography, in particular, has displayed growing interest in aspects of translation and linguistic mediation that should motivate new approaches, among them, studying the circulation of ideas, knowledge, and texts in different spaces, which contribute to specifying important aspects of intellectual history in its cultural and material dimensions. On the other hand, the practice of translation itself and interpretation in current contexts poses questions that require interdisciplinary reflection.

In the context of Chile, studying literature from a translation studies perspective must still be developed, although interest is growing in this line of research. Contexts, discourses, periods, texts, textual platforms, agents, languages, institutions: the different dimensions and facets of translation and interpretation pose a potential universe of monodisciplinary and inter or multidisciplinary studies. The possible approaches are also diverse: linguistic historiography, sociolinguistics, sociology, literary history, intellectual history, anthropology, intellectual philosophy.

The importance and role of indigenous languages in Latin America has been the focus of studies in light of the recognition of indigenous peoples. Translation and interpretation practices of these languages require academic attention and political commitment. Mapudungun and its translatory relationship with Spanish demonstrate the potential to comprehend how translation and interpretation influence the development of languages themselves, and how these practices contribute to the construction of subjectivities and ethical-political spaces of coexistence. Projecting the history of this relationship into the present can help comprehend aspects of communication in today's society and renovate the perspective of translation studies.

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