

THUD!!! Comic Book Translation Studies

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The thematic dossier of issue no. 38 of *Tradução em Revista* proposes an in-depth reflection on the translation practices involving comic books, addressing their complex intersections. Far from treating comics as a secondary or peripheral object within Translation Studies, this issue starts from the recognition that comics constitute a dense discursive field, traversed by graphic regimes, forms of written orality, visual structures, and specific temporalities that challenge traditional models of textual translation.

Although comic book translation has been present in Brazil since this type of publication began to circulate more widely in the country, the establishment of an academic field dedicated to analyzing such practices is a more recent phenomenon. As Nilce Pereira and Paula Arbex (2020) show, until 2018, studies in this area were mainly focused on graphic novels and literary adaptations. Alongside this, it is noteworthy that professional Brazilian comic book translators have also shown interest in contributing to academia with more in-depth reflections on the topic and on their own practices — among them, one can mention Renata Leitão (2012), Carol Pimentel (2016), and Érico Assis (2018).

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In 2013, the book *Pescando imagens com rede textual: HQ como tradução*, organized by Andreia Guerini and Tereza Virgínia Ribeiro Barbosa, introduced an attempt to contribute to discussions on comic book translation within the Brazilian context, though it presented notable limitations. The approaches were, for the most part, either generic or poorly grounded, rarely engaging with the verbo-visual complexity inherent to comics. As a result, the analyses failed to delve into the formal and translational challenges specific to the medium. Even so, the volume began to circulate widely in academic circles—more for filling a bibliographic gap in the national literature than for offering consistent conceptual contributions. In 2016, the first academic issue dedicated to the topic was published in the journal *TradTerm*, volume 27 — *Quadrinhos em Tradução* (2016), organized by researchers Rodrigo Faveri and Dennys Silva-Reis. This dossier presented a strand of the theoretical production then emerging in Brazilian academia, featuring contributions from translators, visual artists, and scholars. It was the result of the Comics in Translation symposium held in September 2013 during the XI International ABRAPT Conference at the Federal University of Santa Catarina.

Since then, beyond the growth of research on the subject, a few milestones regarding comic book translation in Brazil can be noted. Among them, we highlight:

(1) the publication of the volume *A tradução de quadrinhos no Brasil: princípios, práticas e perspectivas* (2020), organized by Kátia Hanna and Dennys Silva-Reis — a book that brought together a collection of contemporary theoretical reflections on comics, including historical perspectives, issues of accessibility, and the international reception of Brazilian comics —;

(2) The podcast *Notas dos tradutores* (focused on comic book translation), hosted by Érico Assis, Carlos H. Rutz, and Mário Luiz C. Barroso, offers a behind-the-scenes look at contemporary comic book translation for a broader audience, including accounts of professional experiences and commentary on translation practices. Predominantly anchored in anecdotal narratives and guided by a largely domesticating approach to translation attuned to market preferences, the podcast addresses the challenges of translation with a tone of lightness and informality;

(3) the uninterrupted continuity of the *Jornadas Internacionais de Histórias em Quadrinhos*, held annually at the University of São Paulo. In recent years, the event has aimed not only to offer a space for reflection but also to provide theoretical material in Portuguese, translating selected texts and distributing them to participants. Furthermore, the event consistently seeks to invite international comic scholars, making the oral interpretation of lectures on comics theory a recurrent practice within this setting; and

(4) the growing visibility of the *HQ Mix* Award in both academia and the publishing market — a prize awarded annually since 1989 that honors editors and professionals involved in original or translated comics published in Brazil. Although the award does not include a specific category for “Comic Book Translation” or “Comic Book Translator,” it is worth noting that graphic projects, foreign editions, theoretical works, and academic research have been among the honorees. In this way, the award has, albeit indirectly, contributed to the recognition of translation and scholarly work in the comics field.

At the international level, the most influential work in the field is, without doubt, Federico Zanettin’s well-known compilation *Comics in Translation* (2009), a volume composed of chapters entirely dedicated to the

subject which, being written in English, resonated widely in subsequent research both abroad and in Brazil. Earlier works on the topic did exist, but they did not achieve the same visibility across languages and academic communities as this compendium. The fact is that following the publication of Zanettin's work, books and academic journal issues on the subject have been released across various parts of the world and in a wide range of languages. Here, we refrain from listing them exhaustively, but a few can be mentioned:

Among the foreign books:

- *La traducción de comics Corto Maltés, Lupo Alberto y Dylan Dog en español* (2008), organized by Estefanía Flores Acuña, Monica Provezza, and María Carreras i Goicoechea;
- *Tradurre il fumetto – traduire la Bande dessinée* (2012), organized by Josiane Podeur;
- *Comic y Traducción: Preliminar Teórico-Práctico de Una Disciplina* (2019), by Francisco Rodríguez;
- *Zeszyty Komiksowe 36: Tłumacząc komiksy [Comic Books 36: Translating Comics]* (2023), organized by Jakub Jankowski and Michał Borodo; and

From international academic journals:

- *New Readings 15 – Comics and Translation* (2015), edited by Tilmann Altenberg and Ruth J. Owen;
- *TransCulturAl Vol. 8, No. 2* (2016): *Translation and Comics*, edited by Chris Reyns-Chikuma and Julie Tarif;
- *Tebeosfera 7 – La Traducción del Cómic* (2018), edited by Paco Rodríguez and Sergio España;

- *inTRAlinea* – online translation journal, Special Issue: *Reimagining Comics – The Translation and Localization of Visual Narratives* (2023), edited by Michał Borodo.

Such a profusion of national and international works attests to the vitality of comic book translation as an academic subject, while also reaffirming the urgency of rewriting, reorganizing, and republishing scholarship on the matter. If there is a field of book production—ranging from print to digital, from domestic to foreign—that remains in full expansion, it is undoubtedly that of comics. Thus, to reexamine this cultural product through the lens of translation is as timely as it is necessary.

The contributions gathered in this dossier address the tensions inherent in comic book translation from multiple perspectives, articulating approaches that range from microlinguistic concerns to intersemiotic challenges. Among the studies, particular attention is given to analyses of graphic and phonetic translation features, such as typographic bolding in *Batman: The Killing Joke* (Luiz Micheletti and Rosa Yokota), the use of eye dialect in *Tintin* (Nícollas Cayann), and the rendering of popular and affective linguistic registers in *Arlindo*, by Ilustralu (Sabrina Aragão and Samantha Souza). Adding to these readings is an investigation into intersemiotic translation and the shifts between narrative codes in the adaptation of Paul Auster's *City of Glass* into comics (Otavio Cordeiro Pinto), with a focus on the interplay between literary text and sequential art in the work of Paul Karasik and David Mazzucchelli.

Across these articles, translation is conceived as an act of intervention that engages with the social, affective, and ideological layers embedded in the verbal and graphic language of comics.

The dossier also highlights non-institutional translation practices, examining the role of scanlation in the dissemination of manga and hard-to-access comics. The text by Fernanda da Silva Góis Costa and Monique Pfau explores the political dimension of these amateur translations, revealing how fans establish alternative circulation networks that subvert editorial control and broaden access to marginalized works. These practices do more than translate—they reshape the ways comics are read, consumed, and signified across distinct cultural contexts.

Another article examines the tensions between translation and children's cultural mediation, as in the work of Bianca Filgueira, who offers a critical analysis of the Brazilian adaptation of *Le Guide du Zizi Sexuel*, problematizing the negotiation of meanings surrounding sexuality. Similarly, Renae Barker and Camilla Andersen investigate the use of the comics format to rewrite legal contracts for children, highlighting the pedagogical and political potential of translated visual language.

Additional texts focus on the specificities of manga and European comics production. The study by Ricardo Jorge Lucas and Thiago Alves on *Kodoku no Gourmet* offers a close reading of paratexts and their translational implications, while the analysis by Marcio Winheski, Brígida Menegatti, and Karine Cunha explores the terminological and cultural strategies involved in translating the Italian comic *Rosa Ananas*. In the case of *Maus*, Jéssica Alonso and Simone Resende examine translation choices concerning the linguistic variations in Art Spiegelman's work, underscoring the ethical and aesthetic challenges posed by its memorial and political dimensions.

The plurality of articles gathered here points to an expanding field that conceives comic book translation as a space of symbolic dispute, intercultural negotiation, and textual invention. By bringing together studies

that examine both institutional and amateur practices, canonical works and alternative productions, diverse genres and multiple visual repertoires, this dossier contributes to consolidating comics as a legitimate object of Translation Studies. It is, therefore, a proposal that broadens the disciplinary scope while simultaneously challenging normative frameworks of textual translation, urging scholars to engage with the frictions, displacements, and potentialities inscribed in graphic languages.

The issue also brings together another substantial and diverse set of articles that both challenge and expand the contemporary horizons of translation studies. Complementing this collection is the interview “Ethics of Renarration,” featuring Andrew Chesterman and Mona Baker, which further deepens the reflections advanced throughout the volume. In the *Varia* section, we present contributions of a heterogeneous nature, both in terms of their methodological approaches and their objects of study. Taken as a whole, this edition of *Tradução em Revista* seeks to conceive of translation as a situated practice, shaped by technical, institutional, and subjective mediations. By assembling articles that problematize different genres and translation practices, our goal is not only to reflect on the current state of the field but also to contribute to the renewal of its critical paradigms considering the cultural transformations of our time.

Finally, we express our gratitude to the researchers and peer reviewers whose contributions were essential to the realization of this dossier. We are equally thankful to the Editor-in-Chief, Teresa Dias Carneiro, for providing the space in *Tradução em Revista* for this special issue, and we hope that the readers of this edition will enjoy and engage with the knowledge made available in the published texts.

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