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The Italian translation of Jerónimo de Uztáriz’s
Theórica y Práctica de Comercio y Marina

Abstract

After the peace of Utrecht, Felipe V – Luis XIV’s nephew – inherited from Carlos II of Hapsburg a nation with an underdeveloped economy: the tax system was highly inefficient, the productive system was weaker than in other European countries and the colonial trade had been seriously threatened by the Treaty of Navigation and Commerce of 1713. Trying to solve these problems, Felipe V actuated a mercantilist policy prohibiting the exportation of corn and textiles; the King also established a strong customs system, suppressing duties between Spanish regions.

One of the protagonists of this new course was the proyectista Gerónimo de Uztáriz, whose Theórica y Práctica de Comercio y de Marina influenced in a very significant way the Spanish and European economic thought of the 18th century. After the first edition of 1724 – characterized by a very limited circulation – the Theórica was republished, «corregida y enmendada por el autor» in 1742, ten years after Uztáriz’s death. The book – whose text is preceded by an epigraph to the King, the censure by the secretario de hacienda Marquis Torrenueva and the approbation by Basque Jesuit Francisco Joaquín de Villareal – was reprinted in 1757.

The circulation of the Navarrese economist’s book represents a striking example of dissemination of ideas: a few years after the second edition, the Theórica was published in French and in English, and in Italian in 1793. The Italian translation, by Gonzalo Adorno, is based on the 1757 edition and reproduces the macrostructure of the source text; the two volumes include the 107 chapters without changes.

My analysis will focus on the Adorno translation choices referred to the lexicon of trade and economic activity. To evaluate the semantic conformity between Adorno’s text and Uztáriz’s original I adopt the “equivalence” concept by ARNTZ/PITCH/ (1989): «Two terms are substantially equivalents when they comply with all the conceptual traits, that is when it exists conceptual identity». To this end I refer to the Diccionario de Autoridades and to the fourth edition of the Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca. This lexicographic repertoire also serves as reference dictionary to show the neologistic characteristics of the words used by the translator.

Furthermore, conforming to HERMANS (1985: p.11) who states: «From the point of view of the target literature, all translation implies a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose», I will show the ideological function of translator’s changes and textual adaptations.

Bibliography


1 Quoted in Mayer (2002: 123).