

Multilingual Practices in Early Modern Literary Culture University of Birmingham, 10-11 January 2019

Venue: Michael Tippett Room, Staff House (top floor); see the University website for directions (link [here](#)).

Supported by ‘Multilingualism: Empowering Individuals, Transforming Societies’ (MEITS), part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council’s Open World Research Initiative, and organized in association with the University of Birmingham’s Centre for Reformation and Early Modern Studies (CREMS) and the MOSAIC Group for Research on Multilingualism.

Programme

Thursday 10 January 2019

10.00 Registration

10.30 Welcome (Peter Auger and Sheldon Brammall), with introductory remarks from Wendy Ayres-Bennett (MEITS project, Cambridge)

11.00 Panel 1: Transnational Communities (Chair: Margaret Small (all chairs based at Birmingham))

Farkas Kiss (ELTE), ‘Spaces of multilingualism in early modern Hungary: humanism and middleman minorities’

Ineke Huysman (Huygens Institute), ‘Multilingual practices in the correspondence of Constantijn Huygens and Johan de Witt’

12.30 Lunch

14.00 Panel 2: Multilingualism in Society (Chair: Gillian Wright)

Hilary Brown (Birmingham), ‘Multilingualism as Cultural Capital: Women and Translation at the German Courts (1600-1635)’

John Gallagher (Leeds), ‘Translating the city: life, death, and multilingualism in early modern London’

15.30 Tea Break

16.00 Panel 3: Varieties of Multilingual Practices (Chair: Ita Mac Carthy)

Sarah Knight (Leicester), ‘“You tip your speeches with *Italian Motti*, *Spanish Refranes*, and *English Quoth Hee’s*”: Multilingualism in Elizabethan and Jacobean Academic Plays’

Jan Bloemendal (Huygens Institute), ‘How to Research Multilingualism?’

17.30 Marilyn Martin-Jones (Birmingham, MOSAIC Group for Research on Multilingualism) on developments on research in multilingualism

18.00-19.00 Drinks Reception, hosted by CREMS (Arts Building, University of Birmingham)

19.30 Dinner in Birmingham

Friday 11 January 2019

10.00 Panel 4: Multilingualism on the Page (Chair: Nigel Harris)

Aurore Schoenecker (Paris), « Pourquoi imprimer en deux langues ? Les livres bilingues français-espagnol entre didactisme, commerce et diplomatie (France, premier XVIIe siècle) »

Alisa van de Haar (Groningen), ‘<3, Love, Liefde, Amour: Sixteenth-Century Multilingual Rebus Poems’

11.30 Break

12.00 Panel 5: Multilingual Learning (Chair: Elizabeth Sandis)

Nick Hardy (Birmingham), ‘God’s multilingualism: ancient languages and the early modern New Testament’

Martin Korenjak (Innsbruck), ‘Between *fida interpretatio* and *halucinatio*: Translating Science into Latin in Early Modern Times’

13.30 Lunch

14.30 Panel 6: Creative Multilingualism (Chair: Hugh Adlington)

Victoria Moul (King’s College London), ‘Popular Latin verse: Anglo-Latin bilingualism, creativity and “translanguaging” in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries’

15.15 Pause

15.20 Conclusion, led by Warren Boutcher (Queen Mary)

16.00 Close

Abstracts

Farkas Kiss (ELTE), ‘Spaces of multilingualism in early modern Hungary: humanism and middleman minorities’

Multilingual literary practices were widespread in the late Middle Ages, but Renaissance humanism with its clear focus on maintaining the linguistic integrity of Classical languages seemed to remain resistant to the challenges of vernacular literature for a long time. My paper will examine the tensions between the multilingual literary use of the vernaculars versus Latin from the early 15th century to the early 17th century. As I will demonstrate, linguistic minorities often acted as middlemen in these cultural transfers that led to the emergence of new genres in vernacular literatures. These minorities often wrote in a ‘cosmopolitan’ language (e.g., Latin, or German), which meant that they had a broader access to cultural goods than the majority of the population. Through the agency of these minorities, multilingual communities soon started to publish multilingual collections of didactic and occasional literary texts, which expressed the social or religious unity behind their disjointed linguistic identity. Figures who had a pivotal role in the creation and divulgation of national literatures (e.g. Franciszek Mymer or Hieronymus Wietor in Poland, Gáspár Heltai and Ferenc Dávid in Hungary) adapted their major publishing language to various audiences and social environments.

Ineke Huysmans (Huygens Institute), ‘Multilingual practices in the correspondence of Constantijn Huygens and Johan de Witt’

Although Dutch diplomat, courtier and poet Constantijn Huygens (1596-1687) and grandpensionary Johan de Witt (1625-1672) were contemporaries and frequented the same circles, historiography provides little information on their relationship. Moreover, no correspondence between Huygens and De Witt exists. Still, their large international correspondences display a considerable overlap in their networks. Quite remarkably, however, the languages used in their letters differ considerably. This paper will address and explore the similarities and differences between the correspondences of these two statesmen, by focussing on the languages used; the individuals they corresponded with; and their roles and positions in the 17th century society of the Dutch Republic.

Hilary Brown (University of Birmingham), ‘Multilingualism as Cultural Capital: Women and Translation at the German Courts (1600-1635)’

This paper examines the performance of multilingualism in early modern court culture, and in particular how translation was a means for women to display their language skills and enhance their cultural capital. It argues that noblewomen were taught foreign languages and undertook translation in part to consolidate or advance the interests of their dynasty, i.e. to make them more marriageable. While there is evidence that this was a Europe-wide phenomenon, this paper focuses on Germany, where rulers had a particularly shaky grip on power and women were more circumscribed than elsewhere in being regarded first and foremost as marriage objects. Language skills were an important asset given the linguistic diversity at the German courts and it is striking how many young noblewomen engaged in translation prior to their marriages. If translation must then be seen as a tool for social control, this raises unsettling questions for the history of women’s writing (which prefers to

emphasise women's agency) and the history of translation (which prefers to emphasise translations as acts of cultural transformation).

John Gallagher (University of Leeds), 'Translating the city: life, death, and multilingualism in early modern London'

Early modern English cities were polyglot places. Migrants from the Low Countries, France, and Italy contributed to the multilingual speechscapes of cities and towns like London, Norwich, and Canterbury. Port cities (and London) were home to speakers of most major European languages, while visitors both voluntary and not brought languages from Japanese to Algonquin to English ears. This paper aims to think about the place and practice of multilingualism in early modern English urban life. Urban records and the records of stranger churches are alive with information about the oral and linguistic lives of polyglot city-dwellers, and allow scholars to think about the everyday realities of living in a multilingual city. How did polyglot homes and workplaces work? How did language difference structure social relations? How did Anglophone Londoners navigate polyglot speechscapes and a multilingual city? And how did the city – its institutions and inhabitants – respond to new and different languages? Where work on early modern translation has often focused on the literary, this paper thinks about translation as a practice of everyday life for English city-dwellers.

Sarah Knight (University of Leicester), "You tip your speeches with *Italian Motti*, *Spanish Refranes*, and *English Quoth Hee's*": Multilingualism in Elizabethan and Jacobean Academic Plays'

My title cites the Cambridge dramatist Thomas Tomkis's *Albumazar* (1615) which like Tomkis's earlier comedy *Lingua* (1607) demonstrates a keen interest in multilingualism. Tomkis followed a fashion for polyglot characters in English and Latin university comedies such as Edward Forsett's *Pedantius* (1581), the *Parnassus* trilogy (c. 1598-1602), *Susenbrotus* (1615) and Robert Burton's *Philosophaster* (1617). Here, characters speak variously in Greek, Latin and contemporary vernaculars, as well as in more surprising languages such as 'the tongue of the Antipodes' or 'the language the Arcadians spake' delivered by 'the great and puissant God of Tobacco' in *Lingua*.

By staging multilingualism, Tomkis and his contemporaries touched on a long-established aspect of university experience. On matriculation, students spoke a range of accents, regional dialects, and languages, but all performed in a Latin that dominated institutional expression, since academic success depended on oral facility in that language. My talk will explore how multilingualism enabled these dramatists to ask questions about social mobility, cultural capital, rhetorical ability, false expertise and humanist learning.

Jan Bloemendal (Huygens Institute), 'How to research multilingualism?'

In this paper I would like to explore the ways in which we could investigate multilingualism. Do we bring together all kinds of case studies and deduce them to a general view, or do we start with a general view? How do we define multilingualism: the existence of more languages in one region, or the use of more than one language by one person? How do we

then discern between polyglossia and multilingualism? I will demonstrate it with Daniel Heinsius and his Leiden circle and a poem by Georg Rudolf Weckherlin.

Aurore Schoenecker (docteure de l'Université Paris Sciences et Lettres), « Pourquoi imprimer en deux langues ? Les livres bilingues français-espagnol entre didactisme, commerce et diplomatie (France, premier XVIIe siècle) »

Lorsque l'infante d'Espagne Anne d'Autriche accède au trône de France (1615), dans son nouveau royaume « ni homme ni femme ne laisse d'apprendre la langue castillane ». Ce mot célèbre de Cervantès semble accrédité par une exceptionnelle floraison de livres bilingues français-espagnol au début du XVIIe siècle. Mais l'essor de la didactique de l'espagnol explique-t-il à lui seul pourquoi tant de livres sont alors imprimés en deux langues ? Cette communication, centrée sur le moment d'émergence de ces éditions bilingues en France, explorera les motivations qui soutiennent l'impression de tels livres à Paris et interrogera les effets de sens que la cohabitation de deux langues sur une même page produit sur les lecteurs. Considérer divers types de livres bilingues (manuels de langue, œuvres littéraires, occasionnels...) permettra d'interroger les objectifs poursuivis par des pratiques de publication multilingues liées aux préoccupations contemporaines, non seulement didactiques, mais aussi commerciales et diplomatiques.

[‘Why Print in Two Languages? Bilingual French-Spanish Books in relation to Didacticism, Trade and Diplomacy (France, early seventeenth century)’]

When the Spanish Infanta Anne of Austria acceded to the throne of France (1615), in her new kingdom ‘neither man nor woman failed to learn the Castilian language’. Cervantes’ famous remark is supported by the remarkable flourishing of bilingual French-Spanish books at the start of the seventeenth century. But does the rapid development of Spanish language-learning alone explain why so many books were printed in both languages? This paper, which focuses on the moment that these bilingual texts emerged in France, will explore the motivations underlying the publication of these books in Paris and will examine the effects that the presence of the two languages on the same page had on readers. Considering various kinds of bilingual books (language-learning manuals, literary works, occasional works etc.) will make it possible to study the aims of multilingual publication practices and how they were linked not only to contemporary trends in didacticism but also to commercial and diplomatic matters in this period.]

Alisa van de Haar (University of Groningen), ‘<3, Love, Liefde, Amour: Sixteenth-Century Multilingual Rebus Poems’

Early modern translation was often used as a tool to experiment with language. An important field of enquiry was the possibility of translating text into images. In sixteenth-century Europe, and in France and the Low Countries in particular, various poets practised the use of rebuses to present their poetry. In these rebus poems, syllables or words were translated into images that had to be reconverted into text by the reader. These rebuses are, to a certain degree, language specific, as one needs to be aware of the code that has been used in order to find the correct solution. However, there are several cases that play with a combination of languages. This paper will use these examples to question the monolingual nature of early

modern rebus poems and to make suggestions regarding their reception and functioning. On the one hand, these language games were ludic works. On the other hand, it will be argued, rebus poems, especially multilingual ones, empowered individuals by training certain transferable skills, such as visual literacy, problem solving, and linguistic creativity and insight.

Nick Hardy (University of Birmingham), ‘God’s multilingualism: ancient languages and the early modern New Testament’

Studying the Bible was probably the first and perhaps the most common way in which early modern Protestants confronted linguistic diversity. By the turn of the seventeenth century, Protestant theologians and scholars had come to appreciate that the Bible, and particularly the New Testament, was the product of a multilingual culture, in which classical Greek overlapped and interacted with Hebrew and its two semitic siblings, Aramaic and Syriac. Lay readers, moreover, were increasingly eager to know about such things. In order to satisfy their curiosity, the clergy found new ways to represent and explain their understanding of the Bible’s multilingualism to non-specialist audiences, including but not exclusively through vernacular biblical translations and their paratexts. But this programme of education was never totally successful: it was impeded by a series of technological, cultural and ideological obstacles. Understanding the factors that helped or hindered early-modern awareness of the multilingual Bible may help to illuminate the broader conditions and limitations that shaped multilingual practices in the period as a whole.

Martin Korenjak (Innsbruck), ‘Between *fida interpretatio* and *halucinatio*: Translating Science into Latin in Early Modern Times’

The birth of modern natural science during the early modern period would be difficult to imagine without the translation into Latin of ancient Greek classics such as Euclid, Ptolemy and Galen, which put their knowledge at the disposal of the educated public, and of contemporary works such as Newton’s *Opticks*, which disseminated the new insights contained therein throughout Europe. On a general, abstract level, this process is reasonably well known. By contrast, the often extremely tricky process of translation itself and its concrete results are little studied – a circumstance that makes the phenomenon look simpler and less problematic than it actually was.

My talk falls into two parts. After a short overview of the field, I will elucidate the enormous challenges translators had to face and the sometimes surprising outcomes of their efforts by the example of Luca Gaurico’s Latin version of Archimedes’ *Quadratura parabolae* (1503).

Victoria Moul (King’s College London), ‘Popular Latin verse: Anglo-Latin bilingualism, creativity and “translanguaging” in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries’

The relationship between post-medieval Latin literature and contemporary vernacular writing remains very little explored; studies of the characteristic literary bilingualism of the period have to a large extent been confined to the writings in both languages of a handful of major vernacular authors (such as Milton or du Bellay). This paper, based on the emerging findings

of a large research project, focuses instead on the evidence for 'popular' literary bilingualism, as demonstrated by the enormous (but unstudied) wealth of surviving manuscript sources dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth century in England. Examples range from macaronic verse, Latin verse in typically vernacular forms (such as rhyming poems and songs), Latin and English verse dependent upon word-play with the other language, riddles, obscene and satiric material, as well as the large number of manuscript examples of the translation into either English or Latin of the most widely-circulated (Latin, or English) poems.