

Dynamics of Neo-Latin and the Vernacular: Language and Poetics, Translation and Transfer. Tom B. Deneire, ed.

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Due at least in part to the rhetoric of the humanists and to the history of nationalism, Latin and the vernacular have traditionally been seen in binary opposition. Humanist literature and culture disdained the vulgar languages and the degenerate cultures they represented. The vibrant new national languages rejected the stilted and inaccessible classicism of Neo-Latin. So the story goes. Yet the Neo-Latin and vernacular literatures and cultures were constantly interacting, appropriating, reappropriating, and reacting to each other's genres, poetics, and politics. The last few years have seen the rise of a scholarly focus on the dynamics of these interactions, and this collected volume is a new contribution to the discussion. The volume developed out of a research group on Renaissance bilingual culture in the Netherlands. The cultural dynamics under investigation, of course, were not limited to the Dutch world, and the volume includes contributions on cases involving German, French, Italian, Danish, and Swedish.

Tom Deneire and Jan Bloemendal write introductory essays to articulate the theoretical framework and kinds of questions they hope to answer. Deneire explains

the project's focus on self-fashioning and reception in order to explore cultural transfer. Bloemendal asks a series of questions about audience, elitism, methods and goals of translation and transfer, and possible peculiarities of various Neo-Latin and vernacular contexts. The studies are divided into two groups, those focusing on the "micro" level (language and poetics) and those focusing on the "macro" level (translation and transfer). In a volume with such varied contributions, it is hard to point to typical examples, but one can highlight a few that show the range.

The essays in the first part consider specific cases of poetic repertoire, translation, diglossia, and reception. Johanna Svensson analyzes the relationship between Danish (and later Swedish) and Neo-Latin in Scania as a diglossic polysystem. Her study probes the borders of the division of labor in regard to how the languages functioned, and she outlines how these functions related to the local social and political dynamics. Ümmü Yüksel looks at the reception of Daniel Heinsius's poetry in contemporary Germany, where it was translated into both German and Latin. Her study sketches out the dynamics of a bilingual (Latin, Dutch) poet's reception in Latin and the vernacular, and she argues that it was a spur to the developing idea of a national literature.

The essays in the second part concern issues of knowledge transfer and cultural transfer, and they are in some cases less concerned with language itself. Ingrid De Smet examines the translation of the language of falconry (which had always been vernacular, French) into the language of poetry (Neo-Latin) in a didactic poem of the late fifteenth century. Bettina Noak examines the multilingual paratext of a Dutch work about Hinduism. She argues that the annotator Wissowatius used the annotations in Dutch with quotations in classical languages to translate knowledge of Hinduism into the Western sphere and perhaps to advance a Unitarian perspective. Ingrid Rowland looks at the role of Vitruvius in the architectural revolution of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. She argues that the various attempts by scholars and architects to translate the text throw into relief the contours of the transmission of knowledge and values from antiquity to the Renaissance, and from Latin to vernacular.

Ultimately, Deneire argues that, on both levels, all of these dynamics (*imitatio/aemulatio*, translation, and transfer) are effectively analogous instances of the same phenomenon, cultural transfer, which fall on different points of "one methodological continuum of early modern multilingual dynamics" (310). One of the great strengths of the book is that it brings together thought-provoking studies that involve different approaches, different vernaculars, and different eras in the Neo-Latin period. The downside of all this variety is that a unifying synthesis is perhaps out of reach. Indeed, the very richness of cases, methods, and contexts presented in the volume are cause for skepticism that they can all be meaningfully subsumed under the blanket of transfer studies. Whether or not transfer studies are so truly comprehensive, the volume makes a good case for examining Neo-Latin and the vernaculars from the perspective of these dynamics, and it will be a stimulating read for those interested in multilingual early modern Europe.

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