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Review of "Renaissance Cultural Crossroads Catalogue"

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Review of "Renaissance Cultural Crossroads Catalogue"

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Hosington, Brenda M., gen ed.

Renaissance Cultural Crossroads Catalogue (RCCC). Database.

Coventry: University of Warwick, 2010. Accessed 21 May 2020.

dhi.ac.uk/rcc.

The Renaissance Cultural Crossroads Catalogue (RCCC), edited by Brenda M. Hosington, is an indispensable resource for the research of early modern English translation and early printed book culture in Britain and abroad, from 1473 to 1640. The project was funded by the Leverhulme Trust in 2007 and the online catalogue went live in 2011. The database contains for the first time a comprehensive record of all known English Renaissance translations: 6,482 entries at the time of printing, with new ones added every year. Hosington and Marie-Alice Belle have edited a companion catalogue, *Cultural Crosscurrents in Stuart and Commonwealth Britain: An Online Analytical Catalogue of Translations, 1641–1660* (translationandprint.com/catalogue), which covers translations published during the English Civil War and Interregnum; the catalogue will be launched in 2021. These two are the only extant online databases devoted specifically to the study of early modern English translation, a field that has been attracting unprecedented scholarly interest.

The RCCC operates as a searchable handlist of translations, supplementing the more generalized *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475–1640* (STC)¹ and English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC, estc.bl.uk) by providing a more accurate, detailed, and focused curation of translations, similar to what DEEP: Database of Early English Playbooks (deep.sas.upenn.edu) has done for early modern English drama. The Introduction to the RCCC describes its inclusion criteria: translations into and out of any language printed in the British Islands, translations into English outside of the British Islands, and translations printed before 1641. As the definition of a “translation” can be mutable, Hosington has provided the parameters for labelling a text as a translation for inclusion: publications that identify themselves as translations on their title pages or otherwise, publications identified by the STC and/or ESTC as translations,

1. Alfred W. Pollard, G. R. Redgrave, William A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson, and Katharine F. Pantzer, eds., *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475–1640*, 3 vols., 2nd ed. (London: Bibliographical Society, 1976–91).

and publications identified by Hosington and her editorial staff as translations where at least one third or more of the text consists of a translation from one language to another. The criteria are capacious enough to include translations not identified as such by the STC and ESTC, while also excluding books like vocabularies that are not strictly translations.

The metadata for the entries is based on the ESTC with some new and adapted descriptive fields to more accurately document translations, including Original Author, Translator, Intermediary Translator, Original Language, Target Language, Intermediary Language, Liminary Materials, Notes on Translation, and Notes on Translator. All in all, there are thirteen major categories with over one hundred subcategories. The following sample entry—John Florio’s 1603 translation of Montaigne’s *Essais*—gives a sense of the detail provided for a translation in the RCCC:

ESTC Citation:	S111839
STC Citation:	18041
Uniform Title:	Essais. English
Title:	The essayes or morall, politike and millitarie discourses of Lo: Michaell de Montaigne, Knight of the noble Order of St. Michaell, and one of the gentlemen in ordinary of the French king, Henry the third his chamber. The first booke. First written by him in French. And now done into English by him that hath inuolably vowed his labors to the æternitie of their honors, whose names he hath severally inscribed on these his consecrated altares. ... Iohn Florio.
Publisher/Year:	Printed at London : By Val. Sims for Edward Blount dwelling in Paules churchyard, 1603.
Year:	1603
Physical Description:	[20], 179, [9], 193–450, [10], 475–484, 487–664, [4] p. ; 2°.
Reference:	Pforzheimer, 378
Subject:	LW; Literature -- prose;
Original Author:	Montaigne, Michel de, 1533–1592

Translator:	Florio, John, 1553–1625
Original Language:	French
Target Language:	English
Liminary Materials:	1. List of the dedications of each book 2. Dedicatory epistle to Lucy, Countess of Bedford and Lady Anne Harrington by translator 3. Commendatory verse to Lucy, Countess of Bedford by Il Candido 4. Commendatory verse to Lady Anne Harrington 5. Address to the reader by translator 7. Address to the reader by author 8. Italian commendatory verse to translator by Il Candido 9. Liminary verse by Il Candido 10. Commendatory verse to translator by Sam. Daniel 11. (Preceding Book 2) Dedicatory epistle to Elizabeth, Countess of Rutland and Lady Penelope Riche by translator 12. Commendatory verse to Elizabeth, Countess of Rutland by Il Candido 13. Commendatory verse to Lady Penelope Riche by Il Candido 14. (Preceding Book 3) Dedicatory epistle to Lady Elizabeth Grey and Lady Marie Neville by translator 15. Commendatory verse to Lady Elizabeth Grey by Il Candido 16. Commendatory verse to Lady Marie Neville by Il Candido
Notes on Translation:	Preliminaries include quire [par.] ² following A8. [Par.] ¹ bears a poem to John Florio; [par.] ² bears errors and omissions; these 2 leaves are frequently lacking. (ESTC)
Notes on Translator:	Son of Italian refugee protestant. Under Mary lived on continent. Educated at Tübingen, returned to London by 1576, where made a living teaching languages. First Italian-language manual, “Florio his First Fruites” published 1578. Taught Italian in Oxford 1578–1583, where married. Tutor to daughter of French ambassador from 1583. Met Giordano Bruno at this time. Produced first edition of English–Italian dictionary “A Worlde of Wordes” in 1598. Translation of Montaigne proved to be very influential to contemporaries. Made private secretary to Queen Anne, reader in Italian and groom of privy chamber in 1604. Married again 1617 to Rose Spicer. Fell into poverty after death of Queen Anne (1619). Died of plague.

Changes:	Created by Susanna De Schepper: 11/04/2008 12:23:09. Updated by Susanna De Schepper: 28/01/2009 13:42:21. Updated by Sara Barker: 04/03/2010 14:16:45. Updated by [name missing]: 16/10/2013 19:20:12.
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Most welcome additions for the study of translations include the Notes on Translator—which amounts to a taut biography of the translator—and the Liminary Materials field, which documents the translations’ paratexts (prefaces, notes to the reader, epistles, dedications, or epilogues), reflecting the attention translation scholars are now paying to the paratextual codes that shape the materiality of the book. The only blatant omission in the field of Liminary Materials is that of visual paratexts, such as illustrations and emblematic title pages. Each detailed individual entry offers a printer-friendly version for individual archiving.

The database can be searched via the “Keyword Search” field on the main page or the “Advanced Search” option. For the “Keyword Search,” the Last Name, First Name search format returns the most precise matches for a particular translator. Users can also search for specific entries by STC number (e.g., “stc18041” for Florio’s translation of Montaigne’s *Essais*). However, the keyword search does not support multiple terms at one time, and the organizational schema for the results is first by the number of keyword matches for each entry, and then alphabetical by title. Once the results are displayed, ten records per page, the user cannot sort the results again by other criteria, such as by date published, which would make the results much more manageable. Individual keywords within each full record do not contain hyperlinks, which would allow for more adaptive and user-friendly research. It would also be helpful to cycle through search results from the individual record view, instead of having to return to the summary results each time, with no indication of which entries have been accessed already. These missing features make searching the RCCC less versatile and a tad more unwieldy than some contemporary databases.

On the whole, the recommended search option is the more thorough “Advanced Search” via specific category entries (via drag-down menu) and keywords (drag-down menu and search bar). Up to three categories can be searched at one time. Searches using the “Subject” category field demonstrate the detail Hosington has provided for the RCCC: arts, sciences, natural philosophy / education, textbooks, study and teaching, history, home and

family, jurisprudence and law, literature, news, philosophy, politics, pseudo-science, religion, and travel, with subheadings under each category for a total of 114 keywords. Travel, for instance, includes subcategories of America/New World, cartography, Europe, geography, navigational manuals, Ottomans, Asia, and general/other. The religion category has twenty subcategories, from canon law to missals.

The result is a potent combination of micro and macro analytical lenses, where researchers can access the most detailed records on individual translations available online (see sample entry above) and can also trace broader trends in translation in ways that were not available before. Before the RCCC, scholars had to rely on forty-year-old numerical surveys for raw numerical data on translations, and now at one click much more accurate numbers are available, which show on the whole that printed translations were a much higher percentage of early modern printing output than previously understood. The catalogue has also helped to overturn some tendentious critical commonplaces in the study of translation: for example, while translations from the classics had been the primary focal area due to their reinforcement of the revival of classical antiquity narrative of the Renaissance, the RCCC actually shows that two-thirds of the source text authors were active between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, proving that translation was predominately a transmission of modern—rather than classical—source texts. And while privilege has often been given to Italianate influence on English letters, the RCCC emphatically shows the primacy of French as the contemporary European language most often translated from, including as a bridge language for classical texts and commentaries. Fascinating comparative trends can be traced when pairing original language and subject, such as the prevalence of romances from languages like Spanish versus that of sermons from German and Dutch.

The catalogue has already catalyzed important research in translation: S. K. Barker and Hosington's edited collection, *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print and Culture in Britain, 1473–1640*,² published to commemorate the RCCC, includes twelve essays drawn in part from information harvested from the database, such as Barker's work on the invention of "news" as a genre in early modern English printing. More recent landmark studies in translation such as A. E. B. Coldiron's *Printers without Borders: Translation*

2. S.K. Barker and Brenda M. Hosington, eds., *Renaissance Cultural Crossroads: Translation, Print and Culture in Britain, 1473–1640* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

and Textuality in the Renaissance made use of the RCCC's documentation of English books printed abroad and their liminary materials.³ A 2018–22 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) grant project titled *Trajectories of Translation in Early Modern Britain (1473–1660): Routes, Mediations, Networks*, headed by Belle and Hosington, is investigating the phenomenon of intermediary translation (translation into and out of one “intermediary” language on the way to English, such as from Greek to French to English, in the case of Homer’s *Iliad*); it draws on RCCC’s documentation of intermediary translator and intermediary language as starting points for inquiry. In the burgeoning field of early modern English translation, the RCCC will remain the database of choice for future research.

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Greengrass, Mark, Michael Leslie, and Michael Hannon, project leads.

The Hartlib Papers. Database.

Sheffield: University of Sheffield, The Digital Humanities Institute, 2013.

Accessed 2 July 2020.

dhi.ac.uk/hartlib.

The Hartlib Papers is a full-text database of the correspondence, diary, and associated material of the seventeenth-century “intelligencer” and man of science, Samuel Hartlib (ca. 1600–62). The chronological span of the materials in the database ranges from 1620 to Hartlib’s death in 1662 and covers diverse topics including religion, politics, medicine, and economics. The Hartlib Papers was established as an interdisciplinary project by Sheffield University Library and the English and History departments at Sheffield in 1985. The aim of this endeavour was to create an electronic edition of Hartlib’s papers, complete with full-text transcription and facsimile images of the materials held in the Sheffield University archive. The first phase of the project was published as two

3. A. E. B. Coldiron, *Printers without Borders: Translation and Textuality in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).