Mikko Bentlin (Greifswald)
Traces of Low German influence in the Finnish texts of Michael Agricola?

The dominant lingua franca of the Northern Baltic area throughout the Middle Ages until the Lutheran reformation was Middle Low German. As demonstrated in diverse studies, this language form has left direct lexical traces in all modern languages situated around the Baltic Sea. While expanding towards the North and East, in its North German core area this language was in turn pushed back by the more prestigious High German language.

Before the famous Bible translation into High German by Martin Luther (New Testament 1522, whole Bible 1534), there were already several vernacular versions available in Germany, the Low German texts however differing much more from each other than the High German ones. The Low German Bible, edited by Johannes Bugenhagen who introduced the Protestant Reformation in Pomerania and Denmark, was published already in 1533, i.e. one year before Luther’s complete Bible translation.

In the 1530s, Michael Agricola who should become the central leader of the Reformation in Finland and translator of the New Testament into Finnish, studied at the University of Wittenberg with Luther, Melanchthon and Bugenhagen as his teachers. Several Finnish studies (e.g. Itkonen-Kaila 1997 and Heininen 1999) have shown that Michael Agricola used Luther’s translation as one of his main sources besides the Greek, Latin and Swedish versions. Under the mentioned circumstances it seems however somewhat strange that to my knowledge nobody so far has posed the question whether Agricola’s texts show specific traces of influence of e.g. Bugenhagen’s or earlier Low German sources. The aim of the paper is thus to shed some light on the clerical aspect of this obvious and important but in many respects still not sufficiently known linguistic contact across the Baltic Sea.

Robert Dittmann (Prague)
Czech Language in Confessional Clashes of the 16th Century

The confessional situation in Czech lands of the 16th century was quite complex. Although the vast majority of the populace (up to 90 per cent) was formed by protestants, the confessional borderlines were far from being clearcut. This ‘interconfessional Christianity’ is possibly best illustrated by a proverb recorded by bishop Jan Blahoslav in his Grammar (fol. 300a): “Kolik mlynářů tolik měr, kolik farářů tolik věr” (There are as many measures as millers, there as many faiths as priests). In the Czech lands the language use was not divided confessionally as much as in nearby Slavic-speaking regions (Slovakia, Lusatia) and the Lutheran denominations were not strong for the most of the 16th century.

On the other hand the Czech standard language and grammatical thought in Early Modern Period is – uniquely among Slavonic languages – extraordinarily closely linked to the biblical translation. The main opposition in the biblical language in the first half of the 16th c. was a tendency to bring the prestigious biblical style closer to the spoken language (an approach influenced by Luther’s Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen) and formulate strict rules of its usage on one hand and a tendency to use a more conservative and highly poetical biblical language (the Unity of the Brethren) on the other hand. However, the main current in biblical translation is represented by confessionally neutral line of official bibles printed by Severýn, Netolický and in the second half of the 16th c. Melantrich. In the contribution we intend to compare the language of these most widespread interconfessional Melantrich Bibles with that used by the Kralice Bible which – limited at first to a minority of less than 5 per cent of the populace adhering to the confessionally strictly shaped Unity, gradually adopting Calvinism – became eventually the model for standard Czech of the following centuries. Attention will be paid to the influences of Lutheran reformation upon these
translations (e.g. mentions of Luther’s and Melanchthon’s works, influence of the Luther Bible in variant readings, education of the translators in Wittenberg etc.).

John L. Flood (London)
‘Quae pestis unquam tam perniciosa invasit gregem Christi?’ The Reception of Lutheranism in England

‘What plague so pernicious did ever invade the Flock of Christ? What Serpent so venomous has crept in, as he who writ of the Babylonian Captivity of the Church?’ – thus the reaction of Henry VIII, King of England, on reading Martin Luther’s De Captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae.

This essay examines the reception of Lutheran ideas in England through the agency of the book trade largely in the 1520s. It will focus on two main subjects: First, the quarrel between Henry VIII and Luther over the Sacraments, as reflected in the many pamphlets issued in Germany and England (principally Luther’s De Captivitate Babylonica Ecclesiae (1520), Henry’s Assertio septem sacramentorum (1521), Luther’s Antwort deutsch auf König Heinrichs von England Buch (1522), Thomas Murner’s Ob der König aus England ein Lügner sei, oder der Luther (1522), John Fisher’s Defensio Regiae assertionis contra Babyloniam captivitatem (1523), Henry’s Exemplum (1526), and Luther’s Auf des Königs zu England Lästerschrift Titel, Martin Luthers Antwort (1527)). And secondly, the publication of William Tyndale’s translation of the New Testament into English (1525, 1526). In particular, it will be shown that, while Tyndale’s linguistic abilities cannot be doubted, his achievement can only be fully appreciated if his translation is viewed against the background of the success, impact, and above all the linguistic quality of Luther’s translation of the New Testament (September 1522).

Karl G. Johansson (Oslo) & Jonatan Pettersson (Stockholm)
In Search of a Language: Biblical Texts on the Brink of a New Time

The New Testament translations into Danish (1524 and 1529) and Swedish (1526) were connected to the breakthrough of the Reformation in the two states in eastern Scandinavia. They represented something new, but they also evolved in the context of late medieval translations in both Scandinavia and other parts of Europe. The production of vernacular Bibles in several parts of Europe more or less exploded in late Middle Ages, and even if there was no comparable development in the Scandinavian countries in the same period, translations or paraphrases of Bible texts were still carried out, visible in the Swedish Pentateuch paraphrase (MB 1 = Medieval Bible Works 1) and the Danish Gammeldansk bibel (GDB). The Swedish paraphrase is generally dated to the early or mid-fourteenth century while the two manuscript versions of this text are from early fifteenth century and 1526, the latter also including some Old Swedish Birgittine translations of the Old Testament from late fifteenth century (MB 2). The GDB was probably produced in the last quarter of the fifteenth century and the manuscript containing the only extant version is more or less contemporary. In our article we wish to regard the Scandinavian New Testaments as parts of a dialogue concerning the possibility and an acceptable way of translating the Bible together with the Scandinavian and European medieval translations, preparing the ground for the Reformation both ideologically and in the establishing of a language for the NT text in the vernacular.

Elise Kleivane (Oslo) & Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (Reykjavik)
The infant Jesus and his mother in Late Medieval and Early Modern Scandinavian book culture

Apocryphal stories of Jesus’ childhood began circulating in the first centuries of Christianity and reached a wide audience in Western Europe through the so-called Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, a
Latin work composed sometime between the sixth and the late eighth century. It concerns not only accounts of Jesus’ infancy but also the conception, birth and childhood of the Virgin Mary and the work became increasingly popular in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as veneration of the Virgin gained ground. The text also reached Scandinavia and Iceland; it is found (in Latin) in at least two Danish manuscripts from the fifteenth century and there are traces of an Old Norse/Icelandic translation of this material in an Icelandic manuscript from the fourteenth century. The Reformation does not seem to have put an end to people’s interest in the events of Jesus’ infancy and the story of his mother, for the text seems to have become very popular in the Nordic countries in the Early Modern era, this time translated from German and referred to in Danish as Jesu Barndomshistorie. It is therefore an interesting example of a religious – or quasi-religious – text that survives the changes in doctrine, linguistic communication and literary taste brought about by the Reformation. The article will outline the reception of this material in Scandinavia and Iceland in the late medieval period and after the Reformation, with particular emphasis on the dissemination of the text in Norway, where printed Danish copies were most prominent, and in Iceland, where Icelandic translations of the Danish text were propagated through handwritten copies. The article will also discuss to what extent the text was adjusted to meet new post-Reformation standards.

Dainora Pociūtė (Vilnius)
The Concept of Medicine and the Representation of Diseases in the Oldest Lithuanian Lutheran Texts (16th Century)

Lutherans were the pioneers of Lithuanian written language and book publishing. The history of Lithuanian literature starts at the first half of the 16th century with the early wave of Lithuanian exiles in Prussia during the period of persecution of Evangelicals in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. In 16th century Prussia more than 10 Lithuanian Lutheran books were published (Königsberg) and two big manuscripts (a sermon book and the translation of the Bible) were prepared.

The medicine and the representation of diseases is of course a peripheral topic of the Lutheran catechisms, sermon books and hymnals. Anyway these Lutheran sources are first to develop the Lithuanian medical discourse based on the terminology of different nature. A considerable part of Lithuanian lexicology of medicine (first of all names of the parts of the human body) is of preliterate (Medieval) nature and has much in common with folk but not professional medical language. On the other hand the Lithuanian Lutheran books are the mediators of biblical medical discourse that made an impact on the general concept and development of medical thought of the 16th century. Finally the new emerged medical phenomena of the early modern times are getting their actual representation in Lithuanian.

Kristiina Ross (Tallinn)
About the fate of some linguistic ideas of the Reformation and the 17th century in the genesis of literary Estonian

Literary Estonian was born during the two post-Reformation centuries in the process of translating catechisms, pericopes, hymns and the Bible. Very little is known about literary activities in the 16th century, but since the 17th century the process of translating ecclesiastical texts can be followed quite precisely. The translators were (mainly) pastors of German origin, who had close contacts with their German mother country and, in the 17th century, with their Swedish colleagues as well. Therefore, the ideas which motivated linguistic activities during the Reformation and reforms of the German language since the 1620s and those of the Swedish language since the 1660s were familiar to the creators of literary Estonian. Nevertheless, in developing the Estonian language, these ideas could not be applied directly, as the situation here was different. For German translators Estonian
was a foreign language, which a great part of them learned in adult age. In this aspect the genesis of literary Estonian was similar to the genesis of literary Latvian and both can be described in terms of postcolonialism. In the case of Estonian the colonial conflict was intensified by typological contrast between Estonian as a Finno-Ugric language and the Indo-European mother tongue of the translators. The process was further complicated by administrative factors favouring the development of two different Standard Estonians. In the paper an attempt will be made to describe the fate of some linguistic ideas of the Reformation and the 17th century in the genesis of literary Estonian. The analysis will be based on the language of hymn translations.

Sebastian Seyferth (Görlitz)


Zu fragen bleibt: Fasst diese Textsorte lediglich Inhaltsbericht? Inwieweit wird hierbei reformatorisches Gedankengut transportiert? Inwiefern wird der biblische Stoff verknapp, gerafft und schließlich exegetisch bewertet?

In der weiteren Recherche wird zu prüfen sein, ob andere Texte des Pomeranus einbezogen werden, da er neben seiner seelsorgerischen Tätigkeit im Kreise Luthers nicht allein Kirchenordnungen für Norddeutschland und Skandinavien verfasste, sondern auch ein breit rezipierter Autor von Bibelkommentaren und reformatorischen Flugschriften war – nicht erst mit posthumer Wirkung.

All dies sind spannende Fragen am beginnenden Zeitalter der Konfessionalisierung.

Merlijn de Smit (Stockholm)
Tradition and reform in Dutch Bible translations of the 1520s

Religious dissidence in the Low Countries of the 1520s was a rich tapestry of reform-minded Catholics, Augustinians, followers of Luther such as Jan de Bakker, who studied at Wittenberg, as well as proto-Sacramentarians. Luther was revered as a translator of the Bible and a critic of clerical corruption, though not necessarily followed in matters of doctrine, and his writings were printed and disseminated widely particularly in Antwerp, where an Augustine convent was located until its forced closure in 1522.

Dutch vernacular translations of the New Testament, and soon of the Bible as a whole, took off swiftly in the 1520s: Johannes van Pelt’s translation of Matthew in 1522; an edition of all four gospels which incorporated the former by Jacob van Liesvelt in Antwerp in 1523; a translation of the New Testament largely based on Luther’s and possibly authored by van Pelt in 1523; an Eastern Dutch translation of the NT published in Deventer in 1525, and finally, complete Bible translations published by Jacob van Liesvelt in 1526 and by Vorsterman, likewise in Antwerp, in 1528. These translations were influenced by Luther’s 1522 New Testament to various extent: Liesvelt’s text is
thoroughly Lutheran, but the Vorsterman Bible departs from it, possibly to accommodate those sympathetic but not committed to the reform movement. The translations by van Pelt, moreover, show the influence of Schutken’s 1399 Dutch translation.

My purpose with this article is to describe the co-occurrence in early Dutch Bible translations of Luther’s influence (both textually, and in terms of translation principles) and more conservative tendencies (such as the retention of the Vulgate as a source text, and the influence of medieval Dutch Bibles). I intend to do so specifically by studying the principles used in the translation of animal names foreign to the Low Countries.

Tanja Toropainen (Turku)
Early Finnish translations of the hymn Te Deum laudamus

Latin Te Deum laudamus hymn was known already in the Middle Ages in Finland. At the latest during the Reformation it was translated into Finnish. The Finnish translation of the hymn occurs in many manuscripts of the 16th and the 17th century. It has published in a prayer book of Michael Agricola (1544) and in a hymn book of Jacobus Finno (1583?). There are both prose-type versions and a rhymed version of the hymn.

The translation of Agricola exists in an old manuscript. The translations into Finnish in the other manuscripts are similar to the translation in Finno’s hymn book. In the Finnish translations there are no big differences, only the first couplet is dissimilar. The translations into Finnish have been made or they have been edited based on the Latin original and the Swedish translation of Olaus Petri. In the manuscripts the translations in Finnish and Swedish often occur side by side, and the Swedish translation of Olaus Petri occurs in Finnish manuscripts also after the new Swedish version of hymn had been brought into use in Sweden.

The translation into Finnish is based on the form of Martin Luther’s German translation but not to its contents. The rhymed version will be found both in Finnish and Swedish in most manuscripts next to the prose text at the latest in the 1570’s. In Sweden it has been found only since the year 1608.

The aim of my study is to analyse the relations of the Finnish translations of Te Deum hymn. I try to find the oldest version of each Finnish translation and to examine how the versions have spread into the manuscripts and books. I also analyse how the texts in Latin, Swedish and German have affected a Finnish translation. The translation in Agricola’s prayer book is especially interesting because it contains the features of the eastern dialect which are rare in the Old Literary Finnish which is based on the western dialects.

Pēteris Vanags (Stockholm)
German Influence on the Christian Discourse of (Early Written) Latvian

The Christian paradigm was one of the central paradigms in the early period of the history of the Latvian written language. The very beginnings of the Written Latvian are connected with the spread of Christianity, esp. with the Reformation movement in the 16th century.

Christian vocabulary of Latvian has of course a strong foreign influence. Christianity as a religion has been borrowed so it is possible to assert that even the Christian discourse has been borrowed. Nevertheless it includes borrowed as well as native elements. If we use Werner Betz’s typology of loans we can assert that the Latvian Christian vocabulary includes all possible kinds of loans: lexical loans, loan translations and creations as well as semantic loans. Borrowings are found even in the higher layers of language, esp., in phraseology.
In the written sources of the 16th and early 17th century there is a group of Christian terms which could be described as semantic loans, e.g. Dievs ‘god’, debesis ‘heaven’, bausls ‘commandment’, veļns ‘devil’, gars ‘spirit’.

The well-known group of Christian loans in Latvian is of course lexical loans. It is an almost closed list of lexemes and one can only argue whether one or another word belongs to the semantic group of Christian loans or not. The early texts contain most of the known (Middle Low) German Christian loans: e.g. altāris ‘altar’, kancele ‘pulpit’, bilde ‘picture’, viruoks ‘incense’, sprediķis ‘sermon’, bote ‘confession’.

There are certainly loan translations from the German models as well. One can mention such examples as Latv baznīcungs ‘priest’ from MLG kerhere, baznīcēta ‘cemetery’ from MLG kerkhof, dievnams ‘church’ from Germ Gotteshaus, vakarēdiens ‘Holy Communion’ from Germ Abendmahl and many others.

The translation of the Bible also richly enhanced Latvian phraseology. As is the case for the languages of all Christian peoples, a large number of idioms entered Latvian via biblical texts. For example, vilks avju drēbēs ‘wolf in sheep’s clothing’ was already fixed in the pericope edition of 1587: Szargates yums par tims wiltigims Prophetims kattro exkan Auwe drebins py yums nake / Beth efēige gir the plegejige Wuelke. This idiom occurs again in subsequent pericope editions and in Glück’s translation: BEt šargajtees no teem wiltigeem Praweešcheem / kas Awjo Drehbês pee jums nahk / bet no eekš=puśśes irr tee plehśigi * Wilki.

However, in other cases Glück’s translation (1685) gives a new external form to an idiom used earlier, which then becomes established in the Latvian language. For example, in the 16th century the idiom pēc ģīmja un līdzības ‘in [our] image, after [our] likeness’ (1 Mo 1:26 et al.) is rendered as pēc vaiga ‘after [our] cheek, face’. In this idiom Mancelius replaces the word vaigs ‘cheek, face’ with the Lithuanism ģimis ‘face’, which subsequently becomes established in Written Latvian. But the phrase acquires its present-day form in Glück’s work: Un Deews šazzija: Darrīsim Zilweku pehz muhśu Ģihmi/ pehz/ muhśas Lihdsības.

Some of the biblical idioms are still used in their literal meaning and synchronically cannot be considered to be true idioms. However, they must be mentioned as being the basis for idioms that over time became established in Latvian. One has to assume that there exist many more of these kinds of cases, which require further study.
4. Lutheran religious literature in view of religious output of other denominations in Poland (the turning of the 16th and 17th century) – Cantionals and Bible translations as typical for Polish Protestantism cross-denominational influences.

5. Linguistic approach to the Polish Protestant writings: textual networks and spreading of ideas could be perceived as a kind of a loaning of a new kind of religious discourse (modern with compare to the medieval one) which is to some extent is universal for the protestant ekumene and to some extension particular as well. Universal are values, argumentation and what is important to me – genres with typical for them patterns of composition, texts (Psalm 46). Particular is the vernacular language with its tradition and in some cases old texts which are adapted to the modern discourse.

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