

Rethinking agency and creativity

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Rethinking Agency and Creativity: Translation, Collaboration and Gender in Early Modern Germanyⁱ

Abstract

This article proposes a re-evaluation of the phenomenon of collaboration in European cultural history. First, it identifies the existence of a tradition of literary and translational collaboration across seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe which has been only hinted at in the literature to date and demonstrates that collaboration took a particularly distinctive form in the German-speaking states. Second, the article reveals a hidden tradition of women who worked together with male colleagues as intellectual equals and published translations which contributed to the national agenda of cultural regeneration. The article argues that collaboration should be understood as a valid and creative form of authorship, as it was at the time, thus pointing to new ways of interpreting the history of literature and translation. It also suggests that we should rethink women's involvement in collaborative (male-female) partnerships and read these relationships as positive and productive, thus offering new ways of interpreting women's history. (150 words)

One of the most famous female translators from the past is the Frenchwoman Anne Dacier (1654-1720). Dacier became renowned throughout Europe for her translations of classical literature; her *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were held to be masterpieces of French neoclassical prose and opened up a new chapter in the Enlightenment controversy about the superiority of the ancient versus the modern world, the so-called *querelle des anciens et des modernes*. In 1683, Dacier had married fellow classicist André Dacier and there followed a period of around ten years when the couple worked together on a number of projects. However, Dacier's collaborations with her husband have not attracted much scholarly interest. Critics pass quickly over this decade, suggesting that Anne should take the credit for any joint work, and focus instead on translations she produced when "independent" and "free" (Farnham 1976, 100-01; Garnier 2002, 24).

The example of Dacier is typical. Collaborative translation – which can be broadly defined as when "two or more agents cooperate in some way to produce a translation" – has long been neglected in studies of the Western tradition.ⁱⁱ Since the nineteenth century, textual editors and critics have seen literary collaboration generally as a weak or "contaminated" form of authorship and have been concerned with establishing the "real, strong, or gifted partner" in instances of teamwork: "It is as though, in every collaborative writing relationship, critics who adhere to a normative single-author paradigm must somehow undertake an archaeological dig to unearth the single author from the rubble of miscegenated, monstrous, messy collaboration" (York 2002, 14). Translators working in teams have been regarded with even more suspicion: if translation was traditionally held to be a derivative, uncreative activity, how much more so if the translator is calling on others for help (see e.g. Bachleitner 1989).

Yet recent research is beginning to offer us a new view of translation as an essentially collaborative act. It is recognized that the notion of the solitary translator is a construct– it has been claimed that in the West this notion has its roots in Renaissance translation theory (Bistué 2011) – and that different agents are inevitably involved in the translation process. Critics have drawn attention to contexts in which collaborative practices appear to have been particularly widespread, such as Buddhist sutra translation in China in the first millennium (Hung 2005; St Andre 2010) or web-based fansubbing and crowdsourcing by global communities in the present day (Costales 2013). Far from devaluing the activity of translation, the fact of collaboration leads us to rethink fundamental questions about agency and creativity. Eugenia Loffredo and Manuela Perteghella have argued for the inherently creative quality of collaborative translation. The interplay of multiple subjectivities can give rise to experimental, challenging and intriguing configurations: "the translation dialogue becomes an 'intercontextual' and 'intercreative' process, a meeting point not only of different or similar contexts, of skills, expertise, cultures, but also of perceptions and cognitions" (2006, 8). This is borne out in a number of case-studies: early twentieth-century writers such as Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf whose co-translations were "aesthetically innovative, creative involvements which impacted on their own writings as well as broadening the scope of modernist poetics as a whole" (Davison 2014), contemporary theatre translators who work together with writers, directors, designers and

actors as “core members of the creative team” and themselves describe collaboration as “an imperative of good practice” (Laera 2011, 216).

Research on collaborative translation practices prior to the twentieth century is patchy, and the significance of collaborative translation for women in past centuries remains little explored. The desire to see women in particular as autonomous subjects can be linked to the feminist project of reclaiming female voices in literary history; feminist critics tend to be suspicious of male-female partnerships, finding enough evidence of talented women who have sacrificed their careers to support their menfolk (e.g. Stephan 1989). Thus where women have been involved in collaborative translation projects this has been glossed over (as in the case of Dacier) or we are told about women subordinating themselves to husbands and fathers (e.g. Heuser 2001; Baillot 2008). An exception is Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806), who worked together with another woman. Her translation of Epictetus was supervised by her friend Catherine Talbot: collaboration here is understood as “a particularly original approach to translation”, as “ingenious” and “proto-feminist” (Agorni 2005, 817).

This article aims to open up new perspectives on the history of collaborative translation. It will focus on seventeenth-century Germany as a case-study and will reveal a tradition of female translators who worked more often than not in collaboration with others. It will bring into the spotlight women who are not well known today, even to Germanists, and, drawing on largely unfamiliar material (unpublished manuscripts, printed works which have not been reissued since the seventeenth century and have been rarely discussed in the secondary literature), it will argue for a re-evaluation of their contributions to German literary and intellectual history. In addition to this, the German case will be placed in a wider European context and we will see that it raises issues which are of relevance to scholars of translation, literature and history more generally. It will be suggested that collaborative working practices were much more common in pre-twentieth-century Europe than has so far been assumed and that women could engage in such practices on similar terms as their male counterparts. Far from stifling their work or denying them agency, collaborations could be egalitarian, enabling women to exercise their creativity as “co-writers” (Loffredo and Perteghella 2006, 8), even in past centuries.

Collaboration in Early Modern Europe

It has been recognized that translations were often undertaken collaboratively in Europe in the Middle Ages and Renaissance (see, for example, Bistué 2013; Rizzi forthcoming) but the extent to which this was the case post-1600 is not yet clear. A recent survey of cultures of translation in early modern Europe mentions some instances of translators working together but concludes that most translations at this time “were the work of individuals” (Burke 2007, 11). On the other hand, when we narrow the focus to England in the period 1660-1790 a sizable presence starts to appear of translations ‘by several hands’ (Hopkins and Rogers 2005, 91-94).

In fact it seems that collaboration was a defining feature of literary culture in the early modern period, at least in England and France. There have been a wealth of studies on literary collaboration in seventeenth-century England (for an overview see Hirschfeld 2001) and critics have started to note that the phenomenon was “surprisingly common” well into the eighteenth century too (Griffin 2014, 49); similarly, in the case of Old Régime France, it has been asserted that “collaboration was so common that few writers indeed can be said never to have participated in any way in a collaborative venture” even if this “has been largely forgotten today” (DeJean 2009, 19; see also Iverson 2009). Critics have interrogated the notion of authorship, being now more sensitive to the ways in which authorship is constructed in discourse according to changing historical conditions thanks to the work of post-structuralist thinkers such as Barthes and Foucault. They suggest that early modern writers had a very different understanding from ours of concepts such as intellectual property and copyright, imitation and originality, and individuality and collectivity (Masten 1997, 358).

These different ideas about authorship are apparent in pre-modern writing and publishing practices. Texts were frequently penned by two or more hands, whether this was acknowledged or not, and collaboration took many forms, from co-authorship of a single work, to revisions made to texts by colleagues, printers, publishers or booksellers, to individual contributions to larger group projects. We

should bear in mind that works still circulated in manuscript throughout the seventeenth century: writing was not always destined for publication, or passed from person to person in scribal copy before publication, and there is a sense in which manuscript composition should be understood as interactive and “authorless” (see e.g. Marotti 1995, 135). Even when texts reached the printing presses, they were often not presented in single volumes as the work of a single individual but in formats which are rather more unfamiliar to us today. This was the age of the collective publication, in which short pieces by various authors signed and unsigned were collected together in miscellanies, periodicals and *recueils*; this was the age in which even works attributed to an individual were framed by or incorporated texts which may have been written by others. Typically, the early modern book in England was printed “with a dedication, a preface (not necessarily by the author), commendatory poems by several different hands, and even a list of subscribers, or (if a play) a prologue, epilogue, and even songs in the text by a writer other than the author. An eighteenth-century book often literally speaks to us in several different voices” (Griffin 2014, 57).

These practices can be linked to social, political and historical conditions, above all the traditions of sociability which characterized intellectual life at the time. For literature tended to be produced and consumed in the context of networks and groups, such as at court and in the salons, clubs and coffee houses. In the case of England, critics have given particular attention to the early modern drama, emphasizing how play texts were shaped by different members of the playhouse community, from theatre owners and actors to annotators, commentators and scribes (Hirschfeld 2001, 616); in the case of France there has been a focus on novels, which were often composed collectively as a sort of “*jeu de roman*” or game within the salons (DeJean 2009, 21-22; also DeJean 1993).

These circumstances suggest that translations too may have been produced collaboratively more frequently than previously thought. Indeed, general surveys of literary collaborations in the period frequently mention translations (e.g. Hirschfeld 2001, 615; Griffin 2014, 55-56), and as more and more examples emerge one is led to suspect that collaborative translation projects may have been just as numerous and varied as any other type of collaborative venture: from translations purporting to be the work of an individual but actually a team effort (such as Pope’s *Odyssey* (1725-6), Pope concealing the fact that he had been supplied with copy of at least half of the epic by his assistants), to translations openly presented as the result of co-operation (such as *Ovid’s Metamorphoses in Fifteen Books. Translated by the Most Eminent Hands* (1717), begun by Dryden and completed after his death according to his methodology and style by members of his circle) to compilations of poems or novels or the collected works of prolific authors to which various translators made discreet contributions (such as the thirty-five-volume *Works of M. de Voltaire* (1761-63), edited by Tobias Smollett and Thomas Francklin) (on Pope see Sowerby 2005, 162-64; see also Hopkins and Rogers 2005, 91-94).

Collaboration in German Literary Culture

Turning now to Germany, we might at first assume that the situation was rather different.. Germany in this period was a conglomeration of largely self-ruling territories without a capital city to match Paris or London: there was no centralized court, no concentration of institutions such as theatres and publishing houses, no comparable salon or coffee house tradition. In the first half of the century, the Thirty Years’ War (1618-48) was fought on German soil with calamitous effects on the population, infrastructure and economy. There was little sense of a national literary culture or even a national language (Latin was the main language used in politics, the Church and the universities, and over the course of the century French became increasingly fashionable among the ruling classes).

Yet there was an intellectual elite committed to cultivating German culture and they frequently adopted collaborative ways of working – even if this has been rarely acknowledged by critics.ⁱⁱⁱ To some extent there are parallels with ideas and practices in England and France. For one thing, we find similar attitudes towards authorship: the notion of writing as the expression of an individual did not become current in Germany until the eighteenth century, and particularly the later part of the century with the Storm and Stress movement’s new insistence on ‘original genius’. In the baroque period, the model for writers is the classical *poeta doctus*: scholarliness is held to be all-important rather than qualities such as talent or inspiration.^{iv} Writing is regarded as something which can be learned and which is done as a side-line. The

poeta doctus sees himself as part of a tradition and is guided by the concept of *aemulatio*, seeking to imitate and match his predecessors, and in this sense conceives of his productions as having many authors (Laufhütte 2007, 139). He draws on the expertise of his scholarly “critic-friends” who examine his efforts in unsparing detail following the ideal of the Roman poet Martial who speaks of his poetry being “rasped by the censorial file of learned Secundus” (Barner 1981, 748; Latin translation in Nauta 2002, 127). Writers do not appear to have felt a particular sense of ownership over their productions: they habitually circulated their manuscripts, readily accepted corrections or contributions, and often published anonymously or under pseudonyms. For the nobility – for whom this pastime was not deemed entirely appropriate or respectable – it appears to have been the norm to solicit (and pay for) help from others, even to the point of employing ghost-writers:

since the author takes no credit for the work, since he does not, perhaps even to himself, regard the work as ‘his property’ (and no copyright laws protected him from losing control of the publication of his work), then he certainly has no compunction about others taking a hand, whether their function be only to revise the style because the noble author has had no time to occupy himself with the unnecessary rules of composition, or actually write part of the work because its author did not have the time to work out this detail (Spahr 1966, 157-58).^v

Even in these war-ravaged states we see the emergence of literary groups and networks. People came together within the social settings available to them and groups formed in various courts, universities and towns. The notion of sociability played a role here too: across all social classes there was no strict dividing-line between the private and the public, and work and leisure were understood not as individual but as communal activities (Adam 1997, 3). For the newly emerging generation of German writers, this collegiality was crucial: it helped them to establish common ground, build and strengthen relationships with patrons, and gain recognition for their work (Niefanger 2000, 75). Members of these networks were involved in each other’s projects. For example, the theologian Johann Valentin Andreae had connections to various poets in Strasbourg; in 1627 one of them undertook a thorough revision of his translation of Guillaume Du Barta’s poem ‘Triomphe de la Foi’ (Triumph of Faith) in order to bring it into line with recently published guidelines on German prosody (Brecht 2008, 191 and 281). Works appeared before the public “in several different voices”, as in England; the eulogistic poems which prefaced many publications reflected a system of favours which enhanced the social capital of both parties (Spahr 1966, 160). Group members also contributed to collective projects. For instance, the circle of writers connected to the town of Nuremberg developed forms of pastoral writing – poetry, novels, *Lobschriften* (encomia written to honour an individual such as a prince or patron) – which were never meant to be understood as the work of a single author. The pastoral mode itself played with identities in that its fictional shepherds and shepherdesses often corresponded to real people. It seems to have been accepted that this game of concealment extended to the writers: “the authors were often not identified as individuals, but rather as a group or as members of a group. Even when the individual was identified as an individual, his name was concealed behind the mask of anonymity or of a pastoral or other pseudonym. [...] This principle of communal composition [...] became an inherent feature of the Nürnberg pastoral or of those pastoral works written in emulation of the Nürnberg poets” (Spahr 1966, 155, 131).

In fact, there was a particularly distinctive culture of collaboration in Germany. Within many groups, members were united and driven by a common agenda, i.e. the campaign to bring about a cultural and political revival in the German states. One of the most significant literary phenomena in the seventeenth century were the *Sprachgesellschaften*, or language societies, which were modelled on European academies such as the *Accademia della Crusca* in Florence and in the German context aimed to promote the German language and German literature in order to reverse the (perceived) moral and political decline of the nation. Many of the *Sprachgesellschaften* were set up in the first part of the century by members of the Protestant nobility: this was a section of society which felt increasingly under threat during the Thirty Years’ War and was looking for ways to group together and advance the cause of reform. Most literary men of the period belonged to at least one language society. Members of the societies collaborated on a range of projects –

with translation taking a central role, as translation was seen as key to efforts to cultivate a unified, ‘pure’ form of the language and revitalize German-language literature.

The largest and most influential of the language societies was the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* (Fruitbearing Society). It was set up in 1617 by Prince Ludwig von Anhalt-Köthen who had become a member of the *Accademia della Crusca* during an extended sojourn in Florence in 1600. Prince Ludwig was ambitious for the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* to be a similar type of institution, referring in one letter to the society as “nostre accademie” and to its members as “des academiques” (Conermann 1978, 104). He tried to foster Academy thinking among members, even if this was made more difficult by the fact that they were scattered across the German states and their exchanges were mostly dependent on letters (112-113). As in the *Accademia della Crusca*, members were given a society name and assigned a symbolic (botanical) image and a motto or poem relating to this image. The society names were meant to promote trust and friendship among members and allow them to communicate on equal terms regardless of social station. Indeed, the Italian Renaissance ideal of *conversazione civile* – transcending class, religious confession and other markers of difference to live and work together in harmony – seems to have been held up by Ludwig and others as a particularly significant model for a country torn apart by religious and political conflict (114; see also Merzbacher 1991).

As Head of the Society, Ludwig encouraged members to work together to produce Academy-like publications. He would have been well aware of how the Crusca Academicians contributed collectively to their flagship project, the *Vocabolario della lingua italiana*, the compilation of a national dictionary (albeit with a Florentine bias) for a linguistically and politically divided people. Like every other Academician, Ludwig would have been obliged while he was in Florence to prepare a page-long extract from Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio every week for the core team of Academy lexicographers (Conermann 1978, 109). Ludwig hoped that the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* would be the driving-force in establishing standards for a national language in Germany. There was a feeling that the language still needed to be developed and that it was too early to aspire to a national dictionary; to begin with, members should concentrate on producing exemplary texts in the vernacular (110). Given the conditions in Germany it was going to be impossible for members to meet regularly in person. But this was to be a joint effort. Ludwig expected members to send him their manuscripts before publication and circulated his own work in like manner. Manuscripts were checked, corrected, added to; scholars outside the Society were called on for advice and help (Conermann 1997, 437). Thus Christian Gueintz offered up the draft of a primer on German grammar and it was revised in minute detail by Ludwig and a team of at least eight others – letters and other written documents show that the project evolved into a major “Academy” discussion on linguistic issues (403). There is evidence that translations underwent a similar process. Wilhelm von Kalcheim, for instance, attempted to render Virgilio Malvezzi’s *Davide perseguitato* (*David Persecuted*) into German, explaining in his preface that he had tried as far as possible to use a form of pure High German, free from loanwords. It is clear from a manuscript copy that Kalcheim had considerable help from Ludwig and others in producing German which was both ‘correct’ (i.e. in line with other Society publications) and idiomatic and elegant; there was a concerted effort here to turn the target text into a model of German political prose (440-450). Like many other productions by Society members, *Der verfolgte David* was published with the name of the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* on the title-page.^{vi}

The Role of Women

We might expect women to have contributed little to these ventures. Compared to their counterparts in other European countries, women in early modern Germany played a rather marginal role in cultural life (see e.g. Sagarra 1977, 406). The conditions in the German states meant that women tended to be more isolated in their respective domestic set-ups and confined to – and consumed by – their traditional duties as spouse, housewife and mother. Many women did not receive the education necessary to become involved in literary activities in an age in which the ideal was the *poeta doctus*. There was a widespread perception among the general public that literary work was not an appropriate occupation for the fair sex. Many of the language societies, including the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*, did not officially admit women as members. A contemporary tells us that women were barred from the *Elbenschwanenorden* (Order of the Elbe Swans) as

most were too foolish, their strengths lying instead in qualities such as piety, chastity, modesty and child-rearing; he cites authorities from the Bible and classical antiquity to justify their exclusion from this kind of forum: “St Paul does not want women to speak in the assemblies/*I. Cor:14*. It does not befit them to speak in public and as Timothy says/*I. Tim:2* women should learn in quietness/ but I do not allow women to learn at all” (Höveln 1667, 103). Few women appear to have published and those who did so seem to have restricted themselves to a fairly narrow range of suitably feminine genres and themes (e.g. verse rather than drama, religious rather than worldly topics) (Watanabe-O’Kelly 2000).

However, it seems that in certain circumstances women could become involved in literary groupings and networks. These women tended to be members of the upper classes or nobility who had received an unusually good education (noblewomen had to be prepared for possible future roles as consorts or regents for their underage children) and had the support of male relatives and mentors. For there were a number of enlightened, influential men in this period who were in favour of women playing a role in cultural life – perhaps because their belief in *conversazione civile* also meant breaking down the barriers of gender. There were a number of courts where women were included in communal intellectual activities and, particularly in the second half of the century, some language societies which opened their doors to a handful of female members (see e.g. Brandes 1991; Brown 2009). Within the bounds of Prince Ludwig’s *Musenhof* (court of the muses) in Köthen, Ludwig’s female relatives were even encouraged to create their own all-female language societies, the *Noble Académie des Loyales* a.k.a. *Güldene Palm-Orden* (Order of the Golden Palm) (1617-c.1640) and the *Tugendliche Gesellschaft* (Society of Virtue) (1619-52). Further down the social scale, a number of women were able to mix with scholars on the fringes of the schools and universities as family members of university men or pastors.

Throughout the century, then, we find women engaged in literary projects, collaborating in various ways with male and female colleagues.^{vii} My preliminary investigations, based on piecing together information from a range of catalogues and primary and secondary sources, have revealed around forty women active as translators in the period 1600-1720, and they appear to have produced translations more often than not in collaboration with others. There are women who were part of teams working on the same text, such as Ludwig’s second wife Sophia von Anhalt-Köthen (1599-1654) who collaborated with her husband and Count Albrecht Friedrich von Barby und Mühlingen on a translation of Isaac Arnauld’s devotional essay *Le Mépris du monde* (*Contempt for the World*) (1618) which was published as *Die Verachtung der Welt* (1641). There are women who worked on their own translations in close dialogue with men, such as the noblewoman Margaretha Maria Bouwinghausen von Wallmerode (1629-after 1662) who published two translations after consultations with Johann Valentin Andreae, Sigmund von Birken and other key figures in the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*: Joseph Hall’s devotional tract *Heaven upon Earth, or of The True Peace and Tranquillitie of Minde* (1606, trans. 1652) and Pierre Charron’s *De la sagesse* (*On Wisdom*) (1601, trans. 1668), a work of moral philosophy. And there are women who contributed translations to composite works, such as Regina Zeidler (1673-?) who supplied German copy of a lengthy French scholarly work on rhabdomancy, i.e. dowsing with a rod or wand, for her brother Johann Gottfried Zeidler’s *Pantomysterium, oder das Neue vom Jahre in der Wündschelruthe als einem allgemeinen Werckzeuge menschlicher verborgenen Wissenschaft* (*Pantomysterium [All Mystery] or News of the Year Concerning the Divining Rod as a Universal Tool of Knowledge Hidden from Man*) (1700). Her translation appeared as Chapter Five in the *Pantomysterium* with numerous annotations by Johann Gottfried.

That these female translators did not pursue their projects independently should not be seen in any way as limiting their agency. On the contrary, their links to others – particularly men – enabled them to embark on translation work in the first place and eased its way into print. We need to move away here from the notion perpetuated in some feminist scholarship that women cannot function as creative agents within (male-female) collaborative partnerships, particularly given the nature of collaborative practice at the time; and we need to recognize that becoming a co-writer, even with a man who is in a more powerful social/cultural position, is not necessarily limiting or exploitative but can be productive in its own way.

Sophia von Anhalt-Köthen would have had the full support of her husband, whom she married in 1626. Soon after she joined the Köthen court she was admitted into the *Tugendliche Gesellschaft*, headed by her new sister-in-law. Her work on Arnauld probably commenced in this period and the project appears to have been conceived from the beginning as a team effort with her husband and Count von Barby und Mühlingen (Anhalt-Köthen 1641, 12). The text was issued by her husband’s printing press in Köthen; by

framing it with a preface, in which he alludes to the involvement of a noble translator but is careful to emphasize her pious credentials, Ludwig could help to make her efforts palatable to readers.

In the case of Bouwinghausen, it was the support of her male mentors in the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* – relationships which probably arose through family connections – which enabled her to bring her projects to fruition (see e.g. Bircher 1968, 87-93; Koloch 2011, 81-94). For instance, she may have been guided to her first source text, Hall's *Heaven upon Earth*, by Society members who held the English writer in high esteem for his innovative 'Senecan' prose style and made many of their own translations of Hall's works in the 1650s (Sträter 1987, 10). Bouwinghausen consulted Andreae in particular as she worked on the translation and attempted to get it published. Their correspondence reveals that Andreae looked over the manuscript for her in stages, eventually sending it back to her "completely finished".^{viii} He helps to smooth its passage past the censors and is consulted when she is looking for "Schutz- und Geleýt-Verße", i.e. poetry to accompany and protect the translation, as the work of a woman, on its dangerous journey round the world.^{ix}

As for Zeidler, she would have been encouraged in her intellectual endeavours thanks to her parsonage upbringing and subsequently her brother, a pastor-turned-scholar who was extremely supportive of female learning: Johann Gottfried Zeidler had edited and published a poetry collection by Zeidler's older sister Susanna Elisabeth and he later went on to develop plans for a "Maids' Academy" in the context of an avant-garde "women's movement" which emerged around 1700 at the forward-thinking University of Halle (Moore 2000; Lechner 1991; Lechner 2008, 285-298). Zeidler's work on the *Pantomysterium* suggests that she was dedicated to her art (her contribution is more than three hundred pages long) and yet she does not appear to have produced or published anything outside this collaboration.

There is no evidence – for example in egodocuments such as letters or in the translations' paratexts – that women were regarded as weak or subordinate partners in these configurations. As far as we can tell, women were respected as intellectual equals. Anhalt-Köthen and Bouwinghausen, for instance, worked with their male colleagues in ways which bore the hallmarks of *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* collaborations and their translations appeared before the public as quasi-Academy publications. Ludwig's preface to *Die Verachtung der Welt* presents the work as issuing from the pens of three members of the language societies: he refers in the same sentence to his wife's society name in the *Tugendliche Gesellschaft* ('die Emsige', i.e. the industrious one) and to those by which Count von Barby und Mühligen and he himself were known in the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* ('der Dienliche', i.e. the helpful one, and 'der Nährende', i.e. the one who nurtures).^x Bouwinghausen and Andreae conferred with each other about the Hall translation in best *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* fashion: Andreae had become a member of the Society in 1646 and although he felt "unfruchtbar" (unfruitful/unproductive) himself by this time he declared himself willing to accommodate the principles of the Society and he probably saw his work on Hall as a chance to help a colleague on a Society project (Brecht 2002, 240; Conermann 1985, 562-564). For Bouwinghausen appears to have been treated as a member of the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* in all but name. She was integrated into the Society network, meeting fellow Fruitbearers when circumstances allowed and maintaining contact with them via letter over many years. It is clear from correspondence that she was fully in sympathy with the agenda of the Society: she reports to Andreae her pleasure in meeting fellow member Johann Wilhelm von Stubenberg and her admiration for his activities ("he has already translated several books into our German and thus helped to promote the resurrection of his fatherland") and later she will refer to Stubenberg as a common Society colleague ("Our incomparable Unglückselige", i.e. his society name meaning 'the unfortunate one').^{xi} She contributed to publications by Stubenberg and others in the same way as any other member, for example by supplying gratulatory poems. When her own Hall translation was published, it was prefaced by poems signed by colleagues with their society names – 'der Unglückselige' (Stubenberg), 'der Spielende' (Harsdörffer), 'der Mürbe' (Andreae); Andreae's in particular is rich in the botanical imagery characteristic of *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* poetry. Her colleagues were full of admiration for her intellectual abilities, expressing the highest opinions of "the German Minerva" in letters between themselves (Laufhütte and Schuster 2007, 210 and passim). In practice, it appears that 'membership' of the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* was more fluid than one might suppose and that the particular nature of this German academy actually facilitated the involvement of women close to the inner cliques.^{xii}

In the case of Zeidler, she appears to have lived and worked peacefully alongside her brother, contributing to their joint project on natural philosophy even though her views differed from his. Johann

Gottfried's *Pantomysterium* was an attempt to situate dowsing – a widespread, high-profile practice in the mining towns of Central Europe at this time – within the context of early Enlightenment ideas about science and religion; Johann Gottfried sought to explain the workings of the divining rod by drawing on anti-Cartesian vitalist philosophy of contemporaries such as Christian Thomasius (see Dym 2011, particularly 139-166). Johann Gottfried makes clear in the text that his sister does not agree with his views and is more convinced by the French scholarship she has translated – in particular the position of Nicolas Malebranche who condemned the practice (Zeidler 1700, 201). She had evidently been involved in discussions and even experiments under Johann Gottfried's roof but remained sceptical and there is no question that her collaborator respects her independence of mind (37-38).

As a result of these partnerships, women were able to make significant contributions to religious, political and cultural developments. Anhalt-Köthen and Bouwinghausen chose to translate similar types of works as their male colleagues in the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* and to use their translations to further the aims of the language societies. Ludwig was particularly keen to encourage the translation and printing of devotional literature to serve as exemplary German works; he presided over a state in which the official denomination was Reformed and he and his close associates were drawn to Reformed texts but in fact he displayed an unusually tolerant attitude towards religion and hoped that in the wake of political set-backs such as the failure of the *Teutscher Friedbund* (German Peace League) in the 1620s, which had been spearheaded by his nephew Wilhelm IV von Sachsen-Weimar, the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* could help to unite adherents of different confessions and bring about a civilised peace across the nation (cf. Whaley 2012, especially 462-474). By the 1640s, devotional literature had become an explicit focus of his printing press (Conermann 1994, 137). Among his own productions at this time was a translation of *Le Sage Vieillard* (*The Wise Old Man*) by Simon Goulart, a French Reformed theologian who had been a pastor in the Calvinist stronghold of Geneva, which Ludwig dedicates to his fellow Fruitbearers not only for its “useful, edifying content” but because it will serve to show them “how one can write and translate prose in an everyday language which is pure and comprehensible” (cited in Conermann 1997, 423, see further 413-427). Anhalt-Köthen's work on Arnauld is, on the one hand, supporting the cause of religious reform. The source text was written by a member of a prominent French Protestant family and although the essay has a strong Calvinist thrust its central theme – the Biblical idea of *contemptus mundi* or contempt for the world, i.e. rejecting worldly values and living instead by spiritual ones – can be seen as appealing to all Christians: “In the era of the Reformation the theme is evoked to inspire reform on both sides of the religious divide by instilling in the faithful the desire to root out worldly influences within the sinner in particular and the church as a whole” (Sedgwick 1998, 255). On the other hand, by alluding in esoteric manner in the preface to ‘die Emsige’, ‘der Dienliche’ and ‘der Nährende’, the text becomes aimed like Ludwig's Goulart translation at fellow Society members – and it seems to have been printed and distributed along the same lines as other *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* works in this period, i.e. with a print-run of c.400-500 copies which were stored unbound at the Köthen castle and distributed personally by Ludwig to Society members and other scholars (Conermann 1994, 125-126). Like the Goulart translation, it was presumably meant to be seen as a model of German-language religious writing.

Bouwinghausen, too, was seeking to contribute to Society work on the German language. Through her two translations she was helping to develop a form of pure High German suitable for the domains of theology and philosophy. For instance, we can see from letters she wrote to Andreae while working on Hall that she went to great lengths to produce correct German. “As far as German is concerned,” she writes in June 1652, “I have consulted several of our best grammarians and tried most assiduously to follow them; although this is very difficult because they themselves are still not in agreement about most of the principal rules”. Her main demand from any publisher is that he will reproduce the manuscript exactly as she delivers it, down to the last punctuation mark.^{xiii} When the translation appears in print, she signals to the reader that her interest in Hall is of a literary/linguistic rather than theological nature (cf. Sträter 2003). The title-page announces that the translation is the work of “a devotee of the illustrious German people who is desirous of virtue” which makes an immediate link to the language societies. She says relatively little about the text or author in the front-matter, evoking Hall rather dismissively in brackets as “clever but misguided” (Bouwinghausen 1652, n.p). She emphasizes instead her affinity with *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft* concerns about the language: she tells the reader that she undertook to translate the work into German, a “magnificent and splendid language”, aiming for “purity of expression”, out of love for the “honoured

fatherland” (n.p.). She also alludes to the difficulties inherent in *Spracharbeit* (the work on language undertaken by language society members), as she had in her letter to Andreae (n.p). Collaborating with Andreae will have helped her to achieve these aims – like Ludwig, Andreae was an extremely experienced scholarly “critic-friend”.^{xiv} There were three translations of Hall’s *Heaven upon Earth* in seventeenth-century Germany and although the translators may have been using different source texts in different languages Bouwinghausen’s is distinguished by her attempt to produce elegant, literary German and to choose vocabulary with Germanic roots over loanwords (“Sitten” and “Weisen” instead of the “Moral” and “Stoici” of a later translator).^{xv}

Zeidler at the end of the century was divorced from the language society milieu (in any case the movement was waning by this time, waiting to be reinvigorated by Enlighteners in the 1720s) but seems committed to ongoing linguistic reforms in that she translates French natural philosophy into a prose which avoids loanwords.^{xvi} Her main concern may not have been *Spracharbeit*, though, but a desire to open up German culture to new developments in the European republic of letters. For rhabdomancy was becoming the focus of an important early Enlightenment discussion around science, religion and popular superstition which would eventually lead to the emergence of the discipline of earth science. An event involving a divining rod had gripped France in 1692: a peasant called Jacques Aymar had apparently solved a murder case in Lyon by tracking down the culprits with his divining rod, an instrument commonly used at the time to identify underground sources of water and minerals. The Lyon case generated a lively exchange of ideas which spread to many quarters – the medical profession, the Church, state institutions such as the *Académie Royale des Sciences* – and captured the public imagination, making this one of the first occasions when the French public had become involved in scientific debate (Lynn 2006, 97-122). Dowsing was much discussed among natural philosophers, many of whom adopted a Cartesian standpoint in order to explain why the practice seemed to work, suggesting that in the Lyon case the murderers had left behind tiny atoms or corpuscles which Aymar had been able to detect mechanically. The fashionable French corpuscular theory was publicized across Europe through Pierre de Le Lorrain, Abbot of Vallemont’s *La Physique Occulte, ou traité de la Baguette divinatoire* [*Occult Physics, or Treatise on Divining Rods*] (1693); Zeidler’s *Pantomysterium* was a response to Vallemont for a German audience. He rejects the materialism of Vallemont and the French Cartesians and provides a counter-explanation which allowed for an element of spiritualism and mystery. The Zeidlers appear to have wanted to present the educated classes with the latest ideas on dowsing, even if Johann Gottfried had a particular drum to beat. Regina’s contribution gave the reader important background to the debate; she translates letters between Malebranche and the Catholic priest Pierre Lebrun on the supposed atomic properties of the divining rod which had been appended to a 1696 edition of *La Physique Occulte*. The Zeidlers seem to have been unaware of other German editions of the Malebranche-Lebrun correspondence; Regina’s translation was presumably an attempt to acquaint readers with an important contemporary debate and spread the latest Enlightenment thinking across the German states.

Even though these female translators have fallen from view, they were appreciated in their time by contemporaries able to make well-informed judgements of their efforts. For example, Bouwinghausen’s commitment to the project of *Spracharbeit* was acknowledged in a number of poems and studies; Birken may have suggested to the linguist Justus Georg Schottel that he include her in the list of writers who had “rendered outstanding services to the German language” which he planned to incorporate in his magnum opus *Ausführliche Arbeit von der teutschen HauptSprache* [*Detailed Study of the German Language*] (1663). For her part, Zeidler’s work on the Malebranche-Lebrun letters was acclaimed by the philosopher Christian Thomasius who, noting that she had been born and brought up in the country, praised her for her command of German as well as French: her skill lifted her work above that of so many other translators and she deserved recognition from other scholars by being entered into the “Catalog[us] fœminarum eruditarum”.^{xvii}

Conclusion

We can see, then, that there was a tradition of collaboration in early modern Germany which meant that women were not always as marginalized in cultural life as has been assumed – this research opens up new perspectives on the role of women in German literary and intellectual history. We can see that in certain

privileged circumstances women were able to adopt working practices similar to those of their male colleagues. They undertook translations in close dialogue with others and on an equal intellectual footing. They were thus able to engage in a surprisingly wide range of projects – encompassing supposedly ‘unfeminine’ genres such as philosophy and science – and make notable contributions to the national programme of revitalizing and promoting German culture.

We have every reason to believe that seventeenth-century Germany was not a unique case. In Germany itself there were opportunities for women to undertake translations within egalitarian, productive partnerships well into the first half of the eighteenth century. Cultural reformers of the early German Enlightenment such as the Leipzig professor Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700-1766) saw themselves as inheriting and carrying forward the legacy of the baroque, and female translators were involved in some of the remarkable collaborative ventures initiated by Gottsched and his circle (see e.g. Brown 2012, 9-39). And given that collaboration was so widespread in the literary cultures of Europe during this period, it is surely time to revisit the work of Anne and André Dacier, Elizabeth Carter and others and try to reassess the significance of collaboration for women in earlier historical periods.

This article proposes a new approach to collaboration and its manifestations in past centuries. Collaboration has been too often overlooked in histories of literature and translation and dismissed as less valid than individual or ‘independent’ authorship. Yet, as this article has shown, collaborative practices were accepted in pre-modern Europe as a legitimate means of creative production. Our concern no longer needs to be the attempt to establish the precise contributions of individuals to collaborative ventures – as critics have been especially keen to do in cases of men and women working together – but to recognize collaborative creativity as a phenomenon in its own right. We need no longer assume that collaborative partnerships – particularly those involving men and women – placed participants in positions either of agency or dependency but acknowledge that even in past centuries collaborations could be a site of dialogue and exchange between co-writers. There are implications here for literary and translation history as well as for our broader understanding of the early modern period. Historians of science, for example, are beginning to view partnerships between famous male scientists and their womenfolk not in terms of exploitation but in terms of opportunity, arguing that the home was a key location for science and medicine in this era and that “the assistance wives, sisters and other women gave to famous eighteenth-century savants was so crucial that science as we know it would not be the same without them” (Rankin 2013, 410-11). A re-evaluation of collaboration more generally may change our view of European intellectual history.

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ⁱ I am grateful to the following Birmingham colleagues who read an earlier draft of this article: Dr Elystan Griffiths, Dr Angela Kershaw, Professor John Klapper and Dr Gaby Saldanha. I would also like to thank the reviewers at the journal for their helpful comments and suggestions.

ⁱⁱ O'Brien 2011, 17. As a new area of research, further definitions or typologies do not yet exist (and given the variations in collaborative practices may not be particularly helpful). Cf. Hersant forthcoming.

ⁱⁱⁱ There is little research explicitly on literary collaboration in early modern Germany. Bodo Plachta's volume *Literarische Zusammenarbeit* which aims to provide an overview of the phenomenon – Plachta tells us that he has tried to include essays on all the "important" periods in German literary history (2001, viii) – jumps from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century. Collaboration is not thematized in standard reference works (see e.g. Lohmeier 1999).

^{iv} It is accepted that the seventeenth century was the "heyday" of the *poetae docti* in Germany (Barner 1981, 728) but there appears to be little literature on the topic. I have found the following helpful for this section: Barner 1981, Niefanger 2000, 63-66, Laufhütte 2007.

^v One of seventeenth-century authors who was particularly active as an editor and co- or ghost-writer for the nobility was Sigmund von Birken. Birken was never mentioned by name on the publications as having been involved in this manner, and his case demonstrates how literature functioned as a commodity: Birken's services were commissioned and paid for, and the work he supplied became the property of the client (Laufhütte 2007).

^{vi} See Conermann 1997 for other examples of translation projects with which Ludwig was involved as co-translator or editor. Collaboration remained an important feature of the German language societies. For example, in the *Pegnesische Blumenorden* it was the policy that all works published by members under their society names should first be read – and if necessary edited – by the current President (Jürgensen 2006, 532).

^{vii} Perhaps unsurprisingly, standard accounts have tended to disregard literary collaborations involving women or treat them with suspicion, e.g. Sibylle Ursula von Braunschweig-Lüneburg and Maria Katharina Stockfleth are described as female novelists whose work "became swallowed up in that of their male collaborator" (Watanabe-O'Kelly 2000, 42). But increasingly evidence is emerging which suggests that collaboration with other men and women was a common *modus operandi* (see e.g. Spahr 1966; Laufhütte, Jöns and Schuster 2005, XXII-XXV).

^{viii} Bouwinghausen to Andreae, 2 November 1651, MS Cod. Guelf. 236.13 Extrav., 208, Herzog August Bibliothek Wolfenbüttel (hereafter cited as MS Cod. Guelf). A letter from Bouwinghausen to Andreae in March 1650 is revealing regarding the nature of the collaboration. Bouwinghausen asks Andreae to check her German but more importantly to check for contentious Calvinist content and to indicate with a small asterisk anything she should change (German Lutherans had considered England to be firmly Calvinist since the Elizabethan Settlement in the previous century, suspecting English devotional writing to contain "hidden poison", and Lutheran translations were sometimes published in "cleansed" editions – see Sträter 1987, 38-57). See MS Cod. Guelf., 205r-206v. I am grateful to Dr Esther Bauer for her assistance in providing transcripts of the letters from Bouwinghausen to Andreae held in Wolfenbüttel.

^{ix} See, for example, letter of 19 July 1652, MS Cod. Guelf., 213r and 214v. For collaboration with others – particularly Birken – on her Charron translation see Koloch and Mulsow 2006.

^x The German reads as follows – a number of keywords are printed in a slightly bigger font (italicized here), which draws specific attention to Anhalt-Köthen's society name 'die Emsige', Barby und Mühligen's 'der Dienliche' and Ludwig's 'der Nährende': Desto mehr ist zu rühmen die gotselige andacht einer *vornehmen Weibsperson*/ welche dieses geistreiche Büchlein zu verdeutschen und ans Liecht zubringen/ vor Jahren die Hände mit angeleget/ und mit Ihrem *Emsigen* fleis sich dahin bearbeitet/ das auch in unserer Muttersprache vielen Christglaubigen gemütern damit *gedienet*/ und sie durch dergleichen geistreiche erquickung möchten erbauet/ *genehret* und erhalten werden." Anhalt-Köthen 1641, 12. See also Conermann 1997, 435-437.

^{xi} See letter of 30 July 1651, MS Cod. Guelf., 207v; and letter of 14 December 1652, MS Cod. Guelf., 227v.

^{xii} As the Society had no physical home and contact between members was mostly via letter, it has been argued that membership was primarily symbolic: "Essentially if you have a situation where just one, two or three people are undertaking activities in the spirit of the Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft then this *is* the Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft, an expression of the will of *the* German-loving society" (Manger 2001, 88, emphasis in original). A further obvious example is the group translation of the medieval Italian novella collection *Cento novella antiche* (also known as *Il Novellino*) undertaken by members of Ludwig's family, probably at his court, in the early 1620s: seven women who were core members of the *Académie des Loyales* and *Tugendliche Gesellschaft* plus Ludwig's son Prince Ludwig the Younger and an editor who was probably Ludwig himself. See Seelbach 1985, especially 1-20.

^{xiii} Letter of June 1652. MS Cod. Guelf., 211v-212r.

^{xiv} For example, Andreae worked for many years in a salaried position as collaborator/proof-reader for Duke August von Braunschweig-Lüneburg – see Brecht 2002.

^{xv} The first translation by Christoph Köler was done from the Latin (1632), Bouwinghausen used a French edition, and the third translation by Henning Koch (1667) may have been done from the original English. See also Sträter 2003.

^{xvi} A comparison of Zeidler's translation and Johann Leonhard Martini's translation of the same year shows that the latter is punctured much more frequently by Latin and French borrowings (Zeidler 1700, 201-517; Martini 1700; see also Moore 2000, XXIV).

^{xvii} See Zeidler 1700, n.p. (Vorrede). Thomasius's comments were responded to in part by Johann Casper Eberti who mentioned the translation (and quoted Thomasius) in his *Eröffnetes Cabinet des gelehrten Frauen-Zimmers* (Eberti 1706: 380-81) (Eberti attributed the translation to Zeidler's sister Susanna, however). On Bouwinghausen see e.g. Bircher 1968, 96-97 and 208-11; Laufhütte and Schuster 2007, XXXVI