

**LINGUISTICA NEERLANDICA:
A DUTCH TRANSLATION OF THE PORT-ROYAL GRAMMAR**

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0. Summing up his review article on various editions and translations of the Port-Royal Grammar Brekle (1975: 228) writes "that much remains to be done by historians of linguistics with respect to the manifold repercussions and influences the Port-Royal Grammar produced during the 18th and early 19th centuries". The aim of this note is to draw attention to a somewhat neglected aspect of this topic, namely, a Dutch contribution.

1. Brekle (1975: 227), when speaking of the existing translations of the *Grammaire générale et raisonnée* (henceforth GGR), refers only to "the English translation of 1753 ... and the Italian translation of 1969 ...". He does not mention any other translation of the GGR. In the same year Brekle's article was published, another English translation appeared (Rieux & Rollin 1975); but I intend to leave this translation and a Russian translation mentioned recently by Priestly (1977: 74) out of consideration here.

As it happens, the English translation of 1753 is not the oldest translation of the GGR. In the *Néederduitsche Spraakkonst* (1781) by the Dutch "maître de la pension" Ernst Zeydelaar (1742-1820), we find a bibliography of Dutch linguistic books (1781: [396-98]).¹ One of the books listed there is "1. Corleva, Algemeene en beredeneerde Spraakkonst. 1740". Behind this short title is hidden a Dutch translation of the GGR. As the complete title of this book, even in Dutch linguistic literature, is rarely given, I may cite it in full: *Algemeene en geredeneerde spraakkonst, behelzende De Grondregelen van de Konst van wel te spreken, op een klaare en natuurlijke wyze uitgelegt: de redenen van 't geen aan alle Taalen gemeen is: de redenen der voornaamste verscheidenheden die zig daar omtrent opdoen: en veele nieuwe Aanmerkingen over de Fransche Taal. Door de Heeren van Port-Royal in 't Fransch geschreven: En [194] in 't Nederduitsch vertaald door Johanna Corleva.* The book was "Gedrukt voor de Vertaalster, En te bekomen te Amsterdam, By Jacobus Loveringh. 1740."² The translator, Johanna Corleva, was born in 1698 in Amsterdam, where she probably was buried in 1752. In 1741 she published a book called *De Schat der Néederduitsche Wortel-woorden ...*, which also carries a French title, *Le Tresor des Mots Originaux, de Ia Langue Flamande, Avec Leurs Derivés*. She dedicated

¹ In the same year Zeydelaar published a *Grammaire générale raisonnée Hollandoise*.

² "Printed for the translator and to obtain in Amsterdam, at Jacobus Loveringh. 1740." A copy of this book (VIII, 213 pp., 8°) can be found at the Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden, sign. 1076 A 8. [This Dutch translation is not mentioned in Tsiapera & Wheeler 1993].

this book to Balthazar Huydecoper (1695-1778), a well-known supporter of the 'grammaire raisonnée' doctrine. To this book the bookseller added a 'note to the reader' in which he informs his customers that he had in print several other books by Miss Corleva. Among them were a new Dutch grammar, a Dutch rhyme dictionary and the complete philosophical works of Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), the Rotterdam philosopher, by then translated already in full by Miss Corleva from the French and the Latin into the Dutch language. As far as I have been able to make out, the books announced by the bookseller appear never have been published.

2. On the basis of Brekle's account the question can be asked, which French edition Corleva used for her translation. Detailed investigation has not yet been done, but I venture to give at least one clue at this time. In 1970 Mathiesen drew attention to the fact that the 1703 edition of the GGR followed in general the text of the edition Paris 1676, "but with at least one major addition, to the chapter on tense. The source of this addition is not known" (Mathiesen 1970: 128). The 1703 edition was published in Amsterdam by Estienne Roger, who was born at Caen in 1664 or 1665; he died in Amsterdam in 1722. It was Roger himself who added a note to this edition concerning the addition on the chapter on tense, as Brekle (1975: 227) has pointed out. Roger wrote:

Le Libraire qui a fait faire cette édition demande pardon a l'Autheur & au public d'avoir osé faire une petite Addition au chapitre 15. de la seconde partie de cette Grammaire, qui traite de divers temps du verbe. Il avoüe que sa remarque est inutile à un François qui sçait sa langue, mais comme il demeure dans un païs ou la langue Française n'est pas la langue régnante il a cru la devoir faire en faveur des Etrangers. (Arnauld & Lancelot 1703: 160).³

What, then, did this 'Addition' contain? This 'apocryphical passage' (Brekle) runs as follows:

Les Pronoms démonstratifs *ce* & *cette*, indiquant le temps present quoi qu'il y ait longtemps qu'il soit passé, on ne peut pas se servir du prétérit indéfini avec ces pronoms, ainsi on ne doit pas dire *j'écrivis cette semaine, j'écrivis ce mois, j'écrivis cette année, je l'écrivis ce siecle*; mais il faut se servir du prétérit parfait & dire, *j'ai écrit cette semaine, j'ai écrit ce mois, j'ai écrit cette année, je l'ai écrit ce siecle*. (Arnauld & Lancelot 1703: 108).

[195] In the Dutch translation we find the same passage:

De aanwijzende voornaamen, *ce, cette*, (deese) wijzende de tegenwoordige tyd aan, alhoewel die tyd lang voorbij is, kan men de voorledene onbepaald met deese voornaamen niet gebruiken: aldus moet men niet zeggen, *J'écrivis cette semaine, j'écrivis ce mois, j'écrivis cette année, je l'écrivis ce siecle*, maar men moet de volmaakte voorledene tijd gebruiken, en zeggen, *j'ai écrit cette semaine*, (ik heb deese week geschreven), *j'ai écrit ce mois*, (ik heb deese maand

³ A copy of this edition is at the Universiteitsbibliotheek Amsterdam, sign. 2376 D 45. There is also a copy of the rare Brussels edition of 1676 (sign. 1808 F 361).

geschreven), *j'ai écrit cette année*, (ik heb dit jaar geschreven), *je l'ai écrit ce siècle*, (ik heb het deese eeuw geschreven). (Corleva 1740: 138-39).⁴

I think we can conclude that Johanna Corleva must have used the 1703 edition for her translation into Dutch, though she may have also consulted other editions of the GGR as well.

3. Many years prior to the appearance of the Dutch translation of the GGR scholars in the Law Countries were discussing the ideas of the *grammaire générale*. It is known, for example, that already in 1671, following suggestions made by the Amsterdam society "Nil Volentibus Arduum", an attempt was made to write a *grammaire générale*. From an extract of the lost minutes of this society we know that the scholar commissioned to such a task was Dr. Lodewijk Meyer (1629-81), Cartesian philosopher and a friend of Spinoza's (cf. van der Wal 1977: 85).⁵ But just as in the case of Johanna Corleva we do not know any details. A definitive chapter on the vicissitudes of the 'grammaire générale' in the Netherlands still remains to be written.

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⁴ In the 1703 edition the whole passage is printed in italics; in the Dutch translation only the French examples are printed in that way.

⁵ [This extract was published in 1982: B.P.M. Dongelmans, *Nil Volentibus Arduum. Documenten en bronnen*. Utrecht HES Publishers].

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Addenda 2006

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