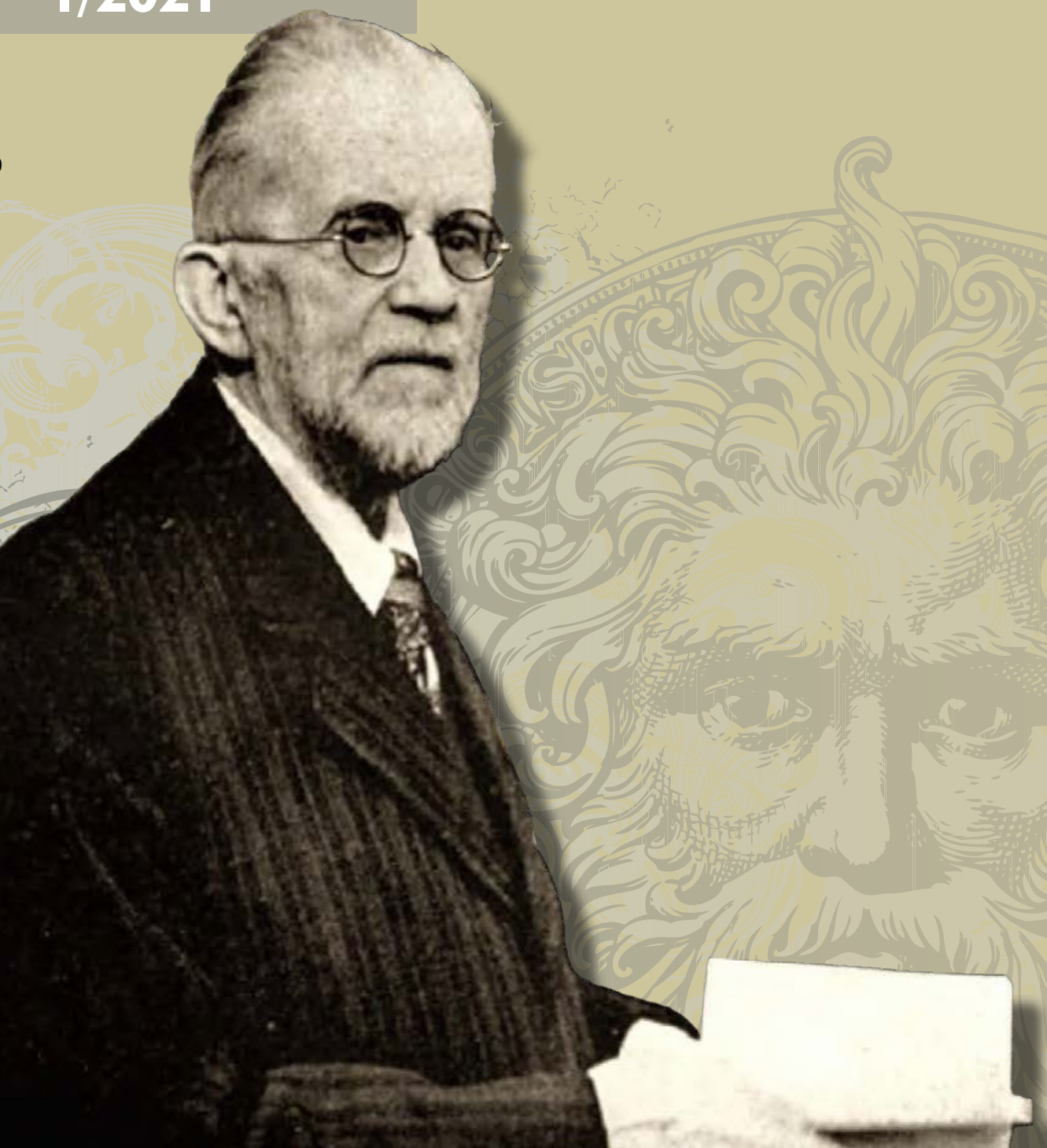


CZECH AND SLOVAK  
**Journal** of Humanities

**Linguistica**

**I/2021**



Czech and Slovak

# **Journal of Humanities**

**Linguistica**

**1/2021**

**Czech and Slovak Journal of Humanities (CSJH)** is a peer-reviewed scholarly journal established in 2011 at Palacký University Olomouc, one of the oldest Central European universities. The journal is dedicated to various important fields of the humanities: history, linguistics, theatre & film (including TV and radio), music, and cultural anthropology, with interdisciplinary themes among these fields.

The journal is intended as a dialogue between Czech and Slovak research and research abroad and as a forum where innovative approaches and current topics are discussed, as well as local themes and previously neglected research. CSJH is open to Czech, Slovak and international scholars and guarantees a fair and accurate reviewing process. In order to reach an international readership, CSJH publishes the majority of texts in English. Regular scholarly papers are particularly welcome, as well as book or conference reviews, notices, research projects and other kinds of academic chronicle.

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On the cover: František Kalda (source: Olga Krijtová, "In memoriam prof. F. Kalda", *Ons Erfdeel* 13 /1969/, no. 1, p. 151)

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## Introduction

The subject of Dutch Studies originated historically in 1797 with the founding of the chair for Dutch Eloquence at the oldest Dutch university in Leiden. The oldest foreign chair is that of August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874), who in 1830 was appointed extraordinary professor for German language and literature in Breslau (now Wrocław). Hoffmann also incorporated the Dutch language, which he had been working on since 1823. With his resignation for political reasons in 1842 the chair ended again.

Czechoslovakian Dutch Studies is the oldest continuously functioning Dutch Studies in Central Europe outside Germany, existing since a century. Although Dutch language studies at Charles University were interrupted from 1939 to 1945 due to the German occupation, the department at the time was based in Bratislava, where the founder of Czechoslovakian neerlandistics, František Kalda (1884–1969), was a professor. Thus, there is an uninterrupted tradition of exactly one century this year.

In this volume, Czech and Slovak scholars want to show how their profession has fared in the past 100 years and is today a flourishing branch of science. We hope that this issue of *Czech and Slovak Journal of Humanities* will give a good insight into this scientific subject that deals with the language of 24 million Dutch speakers and with Dutch-written literature.

Olomouc, 1 September 2021

On behalf of the authors:  
Wilken Engelbrecht



# Benjamin Bossaert

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## The Development of Dutch Studies since 1918

**Abstract** | This article provides an overview of the most important developments in Dutch Studies from 1918. Dutch Studies in Czechoslovakia (and after 1993 in the two independent countries) has always been closely linked to the developments of history in the Republic(s) and to the history of the universities where Dutch was taught. This field of study emerged, of course, after a longer history of intercultural contacts and the corresponding university climate. The article works with the theory of Bruno Latour (1987), which provides a methodological framework for the historiography of a science. The aim of the article is to apply this methodology to the main evolutions in the scientific profile of Low Countries studies in Prague, Bratislava, Olomouc, Brno and Ružomberok respectively.

**Keywords** | Historiography, Dutch studies, Low Countries studies, University history, Sociology of science

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### Introduction and Methodology

Dutch Studies<sup>1</sup> is a field that has rightly acquired a tradition in the university landscape of the Czech Republic and Slovakia over the past hundred years. As it is exactly 100 years ago that František Kalda (1877–1969) was appointed as a lecturer in Dutch at Charles University in Prague, this article offers an opportunity to provide an overview of the most important developments, including the university climate in which Dutch Studies could move and the problems it had to face. The aim of this article is to sketch a scholarly evolution in the profile of Dutch Studies as it developed over the past century in the Czech and Slovak republics.

In *Pandora's Hope, Essays on the Reality of Science Studies*, Bruno Latour (1999: 99–108) suggests a model for linking scientific disciplines in their social context. It is Jaap Grave (2010: 23–25) who applies his model to Dutch and German studies, although Latour's original model was initially based on examples from the natural sciences. I share Grave's opinion, however, that this model can be applied to the description of developments in Dutch Studies. This sociological view may help to situate these developments in a broader context and describe them more comprehensively than merely a history of personalities within Dutch studies. Or to avoid, as Horký (2015: 18–19) points out, an excessive focus on the representation of the respective universities, which are described in a too narrow national framework and are limited to a list of actors and personalities linked to the places where the studies are offered.

Latour starts from a model that allows scientific facts to circulate (see Figure 1). He compares the scientific system with the blood circulation that has to flow in a streamlined way and is linked

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<sup>1</sup> In this article, the term Dutch studies is used as a synonym for Low Countries studies.



to each other by *Links and Knots*, terms that he prefers to use here in order to avoid the broader term concepts. First of all, it is important that colleagues make their studies public and distribute them more widely. In addition to their closest colleagues, there must also be a *Mobilization of the World*. Latour means by this that the instruments have to be discovered, or created and disseminated, in order to make the field develop. In the example of nuclear fusion (his original case), he mentions laboratories; in our field of studies one can think of libraries, archival collections, dictionaries, and appropriate handbooks and literary histories to save and pass on the knowledge. The second step in his circulation is the *Autonomisation*. The pioneering researchers had to seek out colleagues in their field in order to disseminate their thoughts. This requires colleagues who are capable of understanding and criticising the theories. Therefore, in this autonomisation phase, one also needs expanding of scientific circles and institutes. The third step in the process is the *Alliance*. In order for the field to grow, alliances are formed in neighbouring disciplines and the discipline in question has to be placed in a broader context. The fourth step is *Public Representation*. The field has to also find its place in the wider society, it must become known, so that it can flourish in society and so that both politicians and the general public see a place for the discipline in question. The fifth loop, the *Links and Knots*, ensure that these first four loops stick together and can circulate optimally.

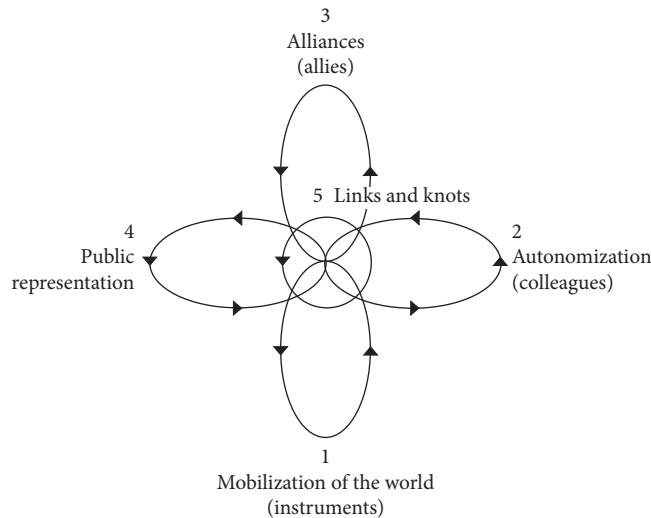


Figure 1: Bruno Latour (1999: 100)

Grave (2010: 23–24) also emphasises that periodisations and caesurae may be used fruitfully as studies are exposed to new external influences and internal changes leading to new developments. As an appropriate example, he mentions the emancipation of various institutes of Dutch from the departments of German Studies. With *autonomisation* one can also think of administrative levels at a faculty and university level that need to be convinced of a study programme in Dutch-language studies. The *alliances* play a role when there is an interaction with the cultural, educational and language policy of both the country and the Low Countries. In this sense, the establishment of the Dutch Language Union (the original name of the organization *Nederlandse Taalunie*, nowadays *Taalunie*) in 1980 has also played a crucial role in the development of foreign Dutch studies. In the field of *Public Representation*, it is important to maintain a good relationship with the media, other experts and non-scientists. In this sense, publications not intended

for a scientific audience, cultural representation abroad and public lectures are also a not to be underestimated part of the development of a scientific field.

Since Latour's first loop *Mobilization of the World* discusses the instruments in which Dutch studies can flourish, in the next section we will briefly look at the earlier university historiography, from which centres for Dutch studies could later emerge.

## Early University Historiography

In order to outline the university landscape in a historical framework for the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which began in 1918 as an independent Czechoslovak Republic, it is important to briefly sketch the background of the past history, which took place in the Habsburg Empire.

The Habsburg Empire was a *Vieltölkerstaat* and consisted roughly culturally and politically of two large areas, respectively Cisleithania and Transleithania, the Leitha River (which now flows in the border area between Austria and Hungary) forming the border. On one side of this area was the capital Vienna, where the Austrian Emperor also held various titles of smaller counties, principalities and duchies; on the other side of this area, the same Habsburg Emperor held the St. Stephen's crown and was appointed Hungarian king in Pozsony (Bratislava) and later in Budapest. This means that the territories of today's Czech Republic fell under the Habsburg Emperor: the Kingdom of Bohemia, Duchy of Silesia and Margraviate of Moravia, while the territory of what is now Slovakia was not a separate independently administered region but was called Upper Hungary, the northern territory of Saint Stephen's crown.

Since Bohemia was a kingdom within the Holy Roman Empire even before the Habsburg period, the Czech King and later Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV was able to establish Charles University named after him as early as 1348. It is consequently one of the oldest universities north of the Alps and east of Paris, following the examples of the Paris and Bologna universities. In 1882, Charles University was split into two universities, one German-speaking and one Czech-speaking (Historie UK, 2018).

The University of Olomouc is the second oldest university in the present-day Czech Republic. Its genesis dates back to 1573, when a Jesuit college obtained the same rights as universities at that time. These rights to run two faculties, one for liberal arts and one for theology, were granted by Emperor Maximilian II. Philosophy was also effectively taught there from 1576. After the Thirty Years' War, this university was re-established. The instruction was interrupted several times, however, with its recent history beginning on 21 January 1946 when the university was established under its present name, Palacký University (Historie Univerzity, n.d.).

Masaryk University in Brno was founded in 1919, including the Faculty of Arts, and was connected with the wish of President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk to educate an emancipated Czech population on the basis of education and culture, in which scientific competition was desirable (Historie Univerzity, 2021).

As for the Slovak part of Transleithania, for a short period of time there was the Academia Istropolitana in Bratislava established in 1465 and the Jesuit University of Trnava under the impetus of the Bishop of Esztergom in 1665, which soon moved to Buda (Eurydice 2021). The Forest and Mining Academy of Banská Štiavnica, which existed for 150 years (1763–1918), was founded by Empress Maria Theresa, and was chosen as the seat of a renowned Academy. It was the first technical university of its kind in the world and the most advanced technology was available for the professors to implement their theoretical knowledge in practical applications in the surrounding area rich in ore and minerals. The first department, one of chemistry and metallurgy, was led by the Leiden (Dutch) professor Nicolaus Freiherr (Baron) von Jacquin,

who was later appointed professor in Vienna in 1768 and who also looked after the botanical gardens there. He became a well-known botanist who collected rare flora for the Imperial court (Lichner n. d., Jacquin 2013).

At the end of the nineteenth century, Bratislava's need for a third university in the Hungarian part of the country arose, after those of Pest and Kolozsvár (Cluj). Finally, despite the demands of other cities (Košice, Pécs and Debrecen), a decision was made to establish universities in Bratislava and Debrecen in 1912. The one in Bratislava was named Elisabeth University after St. Elisabeth of Thuringia. The development of this university was eventually disrupted by the First World War, but in 1917, a Faculty of Arts was nevertheless established, whose lecturers, however, continued to teach mainly in Hungary after the First World War because they refused to swear allegiance to the newly independent Czechoslovak Republic (Jančura 2012).

On 23 September 1921, seven professors met in the buildings of the Rector's Office of Comenius University to establish the Faculty of Arts and to train the first generation of Slovak experts. These seven professors (of whom the Czech Josef Hanuš became the first dean and the Slovak Jozef Škultéty the first vice-dean) also wrote to their colleagues at Charles University to collaborate in building a scholarly tradition in Slovakia. Over the next seven years, among other things, a seminar for English and German studies was established (Sokolovský 2011: 5). Professor Kalda from Prague was hired as an expert for this purpose, which means that Dutch Studies in Slovakia follow in the footsteps of the lectures he had already begun in Prague. The following section outlines the development of Dutch Studies over the following decades.

## Developments before World War II

The development of the Dutch language in higher education in Czechoslovakia before 1989 can be roughly divided into three periods. Engelbrecht (2010: 237–238) describes the period before World War II, which is actually initially linked to the professional academic activities of Prof. František Kalda,<sup>2</sup> who simultaneously offered courses at three universities and published studies on Dutch, as well as Low German and Afrikaans linguistics. Although he started teaching Dutch at the Technical University in Prague in 1918, it is the year 1921 when Kalda habilitates and thus receives the title of associate professor at Charles University in Prague, which is generally marked as the beginning of the academic study of Dutch in Czechoslovakia. Kalda took up an appointment at Comenius University in Bratislava in 1927, where he established the Department for English and German Studies, and even continued to teach there after 1939, when the Czech universities had to close down due to the German occupation of the protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. During the Second World War, Comenius University changed its name to the Slovak University and Kalda continued to teach there. He returned to Prague in 1959 when he retired (Kluková et al. 2017: 30–31).

Kalda was not the only teacher in Prague who was involved in Dutch language teaching. His former teacher, the German and Scandinavian studies scholar, Arnošt Vilém Kraus (1859–1943) may be called the founder of Czech Scandinavian Studies and founded in 1930 together with Kalda the so-called Scandinavian and Dutch Institute in Prague. We should also mention the English scholar Bohumil Trnka (1895–1984). Trnka was a linguist who had contacts with the well-known Prague linguistic circle from which the Prague structuralist school would later emerge. He was appointed Professor of English in 1938 and wrote the first Dutch handbook for Czech speakers. Trnka was involved in phonetics, just like Přemysl Janota (1926–2008), who came into contact with Dutch during a stay in Walcheren (Janota 1997: 29), then studied

<sup>2</sup> The article by Engelbrecht in this issue discusses the life and work of Professor Kalda in more detail.

phonetics at the University of Amsterdam and met the renowned phonetician Louise Kaiser (1891–1972). He eventually became Vice-president of the International Phonetic Association. Janota was to systematically develop Dutch into a subject in Prague after 1948, later with the help of Olga Krijtová (1931–2013)<sup>3</sup> (Engelbrecht 2008a: 98).

In the pre-war development of Dutch Studies, it is important to highlight the role of František Kalda who used his networks in the autonomization of the field and his various alliances. The focus was strongly linguist, with networks extending to phonetics. The Second World War marks a very clear cut-off point with the closure of all Czech universities, as a result of which Low Countries Studies in Prague only continues with the arrival of the Dutch lecturer Vorrink in 1945. Kalda was allowed, however, to continue teaching in the so-called Slovak Republic at the Slovak University in Bratislava, thus there was still continuity in Czechoslovak Dutch Studies. Kalda's double job provided for successors in both parts of the country.

## Major Developments from 1948 to 1989

The years between 1948 and 1989 can be classified as the second period, when a socialist regime was installed in Czechoslovakia and Dutch as a Western European language was not really desirable for study purposes. Various attempts to establish or continue Dutch studies in Prague, Brno and Olomouc were interrupted or continued only as a lectureship (Brno). In reality, only the department of Dutch at Charles University in Prague could continue to exist in this period thanks to the great motivation of Olga Krijtová, who was also a well-known translator of important Dutch and Flemish writers.

It has been mentioned in the previous section that Přemysl Janota taught Dutch in Prague from 1948 and later received help from his student Olga Fuchsová. She married a Dutch political refugee, Hans Krijt (1927–2011), and became the face of Prague's Dutch studies, not only as a teacher of Dutch and a woman of letters, but especially through her literary translations, by means of which, according to Latour's model, she forms a link between the elements of *Alliances* and *Public Representation*. Engelbrecht (2010: 240) also mentions the scholarly activities of the historian Josef Polišenský, an authority on the Republic of the Netherlands during the Thirty Years' War, who helped shape the Czech image of the Netherlands in this field of study. Hrnčířová (2008: 103–105) outlines that the main activities of the Department of Dutch Studies between 1948 and 1989, apart from the training of a generation of literary translators and a literary history for the general public by Krijtová, were in the field of lexicography. In 1976, Hans and Olga Krijt compiled a Czech-Dutch, Dutch-Czech pocket dictionary and published a second edition with Přemysl Janota in 1984 and a third in 1997. Zdenka Hrnčířová compiled with František Čermák a Dutch-Czech dictionary with over 55,000 entries in 1989. It was republished in an adapted spelling in 1997.<sup>4</sup>

The developments of Dutch studies in Brno and Olomouc<sup>5</sup> only began to develop after the Second World War and in both cases by coincidences and the personal contacts of the main personages (Engelbrecht (2008a: 98). The medievalist Leopold Zatočil (1905–1992) worked in Brno, who also included Middle Dutch in his research interests. Erika Solařová-Montijn (1912–2016)

<sup>3</sup> Because of her pivotal role in the development of Dutch studies in Prague, an article in this issue by Marta Kostecká and Veronika Horáčková is dedicated to Olga Krijtová.

<sup>4</sup> In this issue, a separate article by Pavlína Knap-Dlouhá and Kateřina Křížová is devoted to Dutch studies in Prague after František Kalda.

<sup>5</sup> Both Brno and Olomouc are in Moravia in the Czech Republic. More attention to the development of Dutch studies in Moravia is to be found in a separate article in this issue.

studied German studies in Brno and was commissioned by the head of the institute to teach Dutch there. In this way, Dutch became a minor subject in German studies from 1950 to 1955.

Dutch was taught in Olomouc due to the encouragement of the first rector of the re-instated university, Josef Ludvík Fischer (1894–1973), who as professor of philosophy in Amsterdam had met many Dutch people. The young attaché Aimé van Santen (1917–1988) of the Dutch embassy in Prague, a Slavonic studies graduate, came to give Dutch lectures and had contacts with the Dutch religious phenomenologist Gerard van der Leeuw (1890–1950), a friend of Fischer and the first Dutch Minister of Education after World War II. After the installation of the Communist regime in 1948, the Dutch classes were discontinued and the Dutch lectureship remained formally ‘unoccupied’ (Engelbrecht 2008a: 98–99).

Josef Skopal (1916–2001) succeeded Erika Montijn in Brno in 1969 and was responsible for the lectureship in Dutch until 1988, while at the same time launching a Czech-Dutch dictionary. This dictionary was completed by his successor, the Dutch Ems Máčelová-van den Broecke (1921–2012), in 1989. Both Skopal and Máčelová also worked as translators and interpreters (Rampart 2008: 110–11).

From 1948 to 1989, only the Scandinavian languages, Norwegian and Swedish were taught alongside German at the Institute for Germanic and Nordic Studies at Comenius University in Bratislava. František Kalda educated two important figures who were to play a role in developments after his departure: Júlia Májeková (1919–1991), who would play an important role as a translator from Dutch into Slovak and an editor at the Tatran publishing house, and Rudolf Gedeon (1938–2001), who would later become head of the department of German studies and help revive the study of Dutch (Engelbrecht 2008a: 97, Rakšányiová 2008a: 115–117, Kluková et al. 2017: 30–37).

It should be noted that during the period of the Czechoslovak Communist regime the Dutch courses functioned, according to Latour’s model, on their Instruments (*Mobilization*) mainly in the field of lexicography (dictionaries) and could maintain and develop, in terms of *Public Representation*, Dutch culture and literature mainly in the respective literary translation oeuvre of Olga Krijtová in the Czech and Júlia Májeková in the Slovak part of the Socialist Republic. In addition, Dutch as a western language was not desirable in this regime, except as a lectureship, with the exception of Prague, which would not lose its status as a main subject after 1968.

## Major Developments after 1989

The period after 1989 can be regarded as the third period in the development of Dutch Studies. Both the fall of the Communist regime and the Velvet Divorce of Czechoslovakia on 1 January 1993 into two independent nations form clear dividing points. Since the development of the department in Bratislava was somewhat different from that of the other departments, it will be given a little more attention in this section. There are once again some striking links and points to be discovered, such as the connection between Olomouc and Bratislava in the figure of Wilken Engelbrecht (\*1962), contacts between Brno and Viennese Dutch Studies and the creation of a new centre for Dutch Studies in Ružomberok. Institutionally, in terms of *Alliances* (convincing the university boards of the need for Dutch study programmes) and *Autonomization*, the *Nederlandse Taalunie* (Dutch language union)<sup>6</sup> played an important role in the development of

<sup>6</sup> The Nederlandse Taalunie (Dutch Language Union) is an organization founded in 1980 as a supra-national institution responsible for outlining the language policy in the Netherlands, the region of Flanders in Belgium and also the Republic of Suriname as an associated member state. The Language Union also supports Dutch education abroad.



the departments. In the first half of the 1990s, the Dutch government in particular looked to the countries that had privatised their markets after the fall of the Iron Curtain and, under the impetus of the Nederlandse Taalunie, funds became available to actively support departments and the teaching of Dutch in these areas or even to (re)establish them. The oldest diplomatic representation of the Flemish community, with full competence for the areas of education, culture and scholarly research, was based in Vienna (since 1994) and also served the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary. Together with the diplomatic representations, the Language Union provided a stimulus for the development of the departments of Dutch language and literature from the outside. Internally, there are of course other developments at the universities themselves.

In Prague, the lecturers Olga Krijtová, Přemysl Janota and Zdenka Hrnčířová (\*1940–2021) continued to teach the main subject of Dutch; with the help of the Dutch Language Union, native speakers were also able to teach mainly language acquisition. Hrnčířová mentions the continuation of lexicographical work in linguistics as scholarly priorities, cooperation with the Czech national corpus for Dutch and a book project on old Dutch prints in the libraries of Prague, Olomouc and Wrocław (2008: 105–108). From 2008 to 2019, Professors Jan Pekelder (\*1956) (Sorbonne Paris) for linguistics, Ellen Krol (\*1948) for Dutch literature and Jana Rakšányiová (\*1949, Bratislava) for translation studies also worked in Prague Dutch studies and helped to train several doctoral students in their fields who now form the core of the academic staff of the current Prague Dutch studies. Hrnčířová also mentions the important event *Praagse Perspectieven* (Prague Perspectives), a scholarly conference which consisted of ten sessions between 2002 and 2015.

Rampart (2008: 111–113) mentions the year 1993 as a new phase in the development of the Department of German, Dutch and Scandinavian studies in Brno, because Leopold Decloedt (\*1964) began to teach the course *Introduction to Dutch Studies* from Vienna and developed the lectureship into a three-year subsidiary study with the support of the Dutch Language Union. The aforementioned Ems Máčelová-van den Broecke developed a method for teaching Dutch to Czech speaking students and translated in the early 1990s the book *Wiplala* by the well-known children's author and her provincial colleague Annie M. G. Schmidt. Dutch Studies in Brno was finally accredited as a five-year Master's degree programme in 1999. It is important to note that Rampart explicitly emphasises the intercultural character of the field study in Brno, which is approached in a contrastive way.<sup>7</sup>

The Olomouc story is remarkable from the point of view of the autonomy of Dutch Studies in the Czech Republic and Slovakia in certain aspects. It is the only study degree offered in a separate institute, Katedra Nederlandistiky (Department of Dutch Studies), and therefore not within an institute or chair of German, Dutch and Scandinavian Studies, although it was developed from this situation. Wilken Engelbrecht, who studied Medieval studies and Latin at the University of Utrecht and the University of Amsterdam, had study stays in Bratislava, Olomouc and Brno. He was approached by local teachers in Bratislava and Olomouc to give Dutch lessons as a lecturer. Engelbrecht (2008b: 139–143) describes the search, after the founding of the lectureship, for a clear profile for the study degree in Olomouc and eventually chose to develop a practical philological profile, which was later accredited as a separate study degree in two different bachelor-master programmes, one with the option Business Dutch, and a more classic programme that focused on linguistics and literature studies (philology) and could be studied as a bachelor programme (together with a second language or history) but also as a single subject Dutch studies.

<sup>7</sup> An overview of the current academic situation and staff is to be found in Kluková et al. (2017: 33–34).

As concerns continuing studies in the field through a doctoral degree, Olomouc is the only department where there is an accredited programme of Dutch studies to obtain the degree of Doctor in Dutch studies. Currently, 6 students are studying in the Ph.D. programme in Dutch studies. Olomouc is also the only department where systematic focus is paid to Afrikaans and in particular Frisian (Engelbrecht 2010: 245), which can be considered a subfield of Dutch Studies. A Frisian summer school was held twice (1997, 2001). Wilken Engelbrecht is a member of the Frisian Academy and a History of Frisian Literature in Czech was published (Engelbrecht et al. 2020).<sup>8</sup>

The impetus to re-establish a Dutch department in Bratislava came from two directions. On the one hand, there was the figure of Jana Rakšányiová, who had been active as a scholar of German and Scandinavian studies since 1967. She then began studying and later teaching at the so-called University of the 17 November in Bratislava, where at that time a number of important Slovak literary scholars (František Miko, Dionýz Ďurišín) were making a scientific transition to becoming translation scholars. They established a translation school which was in line with the translatology (translation studies) that was developing in the Low Countries, with their important professors being James S. Holmes in Amsterdam, Raymond van den Broeck in Antwerp and later on José Lambert at KU Leuven. They formed contacts with another emerging scholarly translatalogical tradition in Israel with Gideon Toury and Itamar Even-Zohar. In this way, a strong research tradition in translation studies guaranteed that translators rather than philologists would be trained in Bratislava (Rakšányiová 2008b: 108–110, Rakšányiová 2016: 66). A comprehensive overview of the cross-links between Slovak translatology and translation studies from the Low Countries can be found in Rakšányiová and Štefková (2015).

The stars were in the right place institutionally: Engelbrecht was asked by Gedeon, then department chair of Germanic studies, to teach Dutch, which led to the establishment of a Dutch lectureship. Together with Jana Rakšányiová and Abram Muller (\*1963), he set about developing a curriculum for translating and interpreting Dutch as a main subject, always combined with another subject, German or English and American studies in the first instance. While Rakšányiová took responsibility for the contacts within the university and the embedding in the faculty and university context, the Dutch contribution of the lecturers provided the financial incentives and contacts from the Hague and Brussels which eventually led to the establishment of an accredited main subject study in 1996 with the language lecturer Abram Muller, Paul van den Heuvel (1952–2015; Dutch language acquisition, language and culture) and local lecturers Jana Rakšányiová (translation, professional translation) and Adam Bžoch (\*1966; literature, literary translation). The interpreting lessons were provided by Jana Verstraeten (Rakšányiová 2016: 39–43; 53).<sup>9</sup>

In Slovakia, a second centre for Dutch-language studies was established in 2002 by Adam Bžoch at the Catholic University of Ružomberok in Northern Slovakia (Engelbrecht 2010: 246). At that time, he was one of the guarantees of the study of German language and literature and taught mainly German and Dutch literature. A second assistant professor gave lessons in language acquisition.<sup>10</sup> The Dutch studies component consequently existed as an optional subject within the framework of a teacher training programme in German language and literature. Bžoch

<sup>8</sup> An overview of the current academic situation and staff is to be found in Kluková et al. (2017: 34–36).

<sup>9</sup> An overview of the current academic situation and staff, including all scholars who obtained a PhD. Degree is to be found in Rakšányiová (2016: 66–77) and in Kluková et al. (2017: 37).

<sup>10</sup> These lecturers were, chronologically, Marta Maňáková (Blašková), Erika Klučková, William Peynsaert, Martina Liščiková (Gartčígová) and Jeannick Vangansbeke.

ended his activities in Ružomberok in 2020 and joined in as the guarantee for teacher training in German language and culture at the University of Trnava.

Finally, in terms of networking, it is important to mention that the *Links and Points* between colleagues from different departments of Dutch Studies remain close. The colleagues regularly give guest lectures at each other's universities, review each other's scholarly work, collaborate on various scholarly and cultural projects, take part in each other's anniversaries and conferences and go on Erasmus+ and CEEPUS-exchanges. There is also a teachers' platform ONETS<sup>11</sup> (stands for *Overlegplatform Neerlandici Tsjechië en Slowakije*, a discussion forum for Dutch studies scholars in the Czech and Slovak republics) where various cooperation possibilities are discussed and maintained. The first Dutch Studies colloquium for doctoral students and young researchers (Do-Ha, PhD.-students and habilitandi) took place in Bratislava in 2005 and since then these have also been organised in Olomouc, Brno and Prague, as well as various regional teachers' meetings of the regional platform for Dutch-speaking students, Comenius.

## Conclusion

As concerns public representation, all the departments regularly engage in dialogue with their local area. All the centres organise the so-called CNaVT exam (*Certificaat Nederlands als Vreemde Taal*), an internationally recognised language exam for Dutch, regularly organise author readings, literary translation workshops, cultural events, language cafés, participate in fairs, visit secondary schools, engage in public lectures and enter into dialogue with their university colleagues or with the diplomatic institutions of Flanders and the Netherlands in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

In this way, an interaction develops where there is no doubt that all aspects of Latour's model in Dutch Studies are present of late in Czech and Slovak Dutch Studies, which has a truly thriving scholarly tradition. The challenges for the future lie more in the institutional framework in terms of academic succession (training doctoral students and professors with a clear specialised scholarly profile, which is difficult to achieve in a small discipline) and the long-term underfunding of education in both countries, which may cause smaller language studies to run into problems due to either student or staff shortages. For the time being, however, it seems that each Dutch-language department complements the others in its own specialisation.

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<sup>11</sup> Special attention to the initiatives of the ONETS-platform and cooperation is dealt with in this issue in the article by Bas Hamers.



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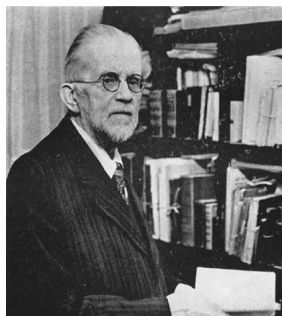
## František Kalda, the Founder of Dutch Studies in Czechoslovakia

**Abstract** | This year, the field of Dutch Studies celebrates its century jubilee in Czechia and Slovakia. The beginnings of Dutch Studies in then Czechoslovakia are linked with the person of František Kalda Jr. (1884–1969), who after his habilitation was named Privatdozent (Associate Professor) of Dutch at the Chair of German Studies of Charles University in Prague. In 1927, he founded the first lectureship in the Dutch language at Comenius University in Bratislava as well. The paper provides a survey of the importance of this extraordinary man for Dutch Studies in Czechia and Slovakia.

**Keywords** | František Kalda – Dutch Studies – Czechia – Slovakia – Charles University – Comenius University

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### Introduction



Kalda at the age of 75 in 1959

“In the beginning was the Word...”. Protestant churches in Central Europe have a long tradition of contacts with their Dutch fellow believers and Czech Protestants are no exception. František Kalda Sr. (1851–1924), a pastor of the *Církev helvetského vyznání* (Czech Church of the Helvetic Confession), and the family of his wife Matylda Szalatnay (1858–1932), had many friends from the Netherlands, mostly from reformed circles. This formed the person of František Kalda Jr. (1884–1969) and through him also Dutch Studies which were mainly directed towards the Netherlands. In this article, I will provide a survey of Kalda’s life, his work and how he built up Dutch Studies in Prague and in Bratislava.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The main sources for personal data about Kalda in the following text are Kalda (1966), Kalda (1967), Schwanzer (1954), Simko (1959) and Terray (1969).

## Youth and Education

It is 70 years ago that I got to know my first Dutchmen. Mr. Lutge and his daughter stayed for a few days at the house of my grandparents. There were many beautiful memories from this stay (songs, fairy tales, etc.). (Kalda, 1967: 97)<sup>2</sup>

Kalda opened in this manner his short memoirs *Niet-schoolse herinneringen van een neerlandist* [Non-academic Memoirs of a Netherlandist] published in the Flemish magazine *Ons Erfdeel* a little bit more than one year before his decease. The above-mentioned grandparents were Jan Pavel Szalatnay z Nagy Szalatna (1830–1898) and his wife Anna Schönfeldová z Tatec (1833–1911) (Dvořák & Dvořák 2006: 221–222). Szalatnay was the founder of the Helvetian congregation in the Central Bohemian city Velim, its first pastor and the builder and owner of the local chocolate factory which actually financed the congregation. Kalda's uncle Justus Emanuel Szalatnay (1857–1910) was bishop of that church from 1889 (Hrejsa, 1931).

It was this house, and not that of his parents, the pastor's house of the Helvetian congregation in Proseč u Škutce where his father František was ordained, that František Kalda Jr. was born on 11 January 1884. This visit therefore took place when he was some 15 years old. The said Lutge must have been Ds. Benjamin Lütge (1858–1927), preacher of the Reformed Church in the Dutch city of Groningen (Den Admirant, 1989), a man who was very active in supporting arising Protestantism in Central Europe.<sup>3</sup>

After his secondary school studies in the district town of Kolín during the years 1894–1899, František Kalda Jr. went to Prague to study German Philology and Classical Philology at the Czech Charles University in 1902–1908.<sup>4</sup> Among his teachers were the German philologist Arnošt Kraus (1859–1943),<sup>5</sup> the English Philologist Václav E. Mourek (1846–1911),<sup>6</sup> the literary theoretician Jaroslav Vrchlický (1853–1912),<sup>7</sup> and the Indologue and Classical Philologist Josef Zubatý (1855–1931).<sup>8</sup> Kalda was a diligent and intelligent student, who after his studies obtained a teacher's qualification for German, Greek and Latin, and obtained a PhD in philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> Het is 70 jaar geleden, dat ik de eerste Hollanders leerde kennen. In 't huis van mijn grootouders was een paar dagen de heer Lutge met zijn dochter te gast. Er bleven nog heel wat leuke herinneringen over /liedjes, sprookjes, enz.).

<sup>3</sup> According to the census of 1910, 1.6% of the population in Bohemia, 1.65% in Moravia and 0.9% in Silesia belonged to the Helvetian Church (mostly Czech speaking), while 1.45% of the population in Bohemia, 1.19% in Moravia and 13.48% in Silesia belonged to the Augsburg (Lutheran) Church (mostly German speaking) (K.k. Statistische Zentralkommission, 1914, Heft 2: 36). During the service period of František Kalda Sr., 1877–1899, Proseč became the largest Helvetian congregation of Bohemia, with 3,348 members (Prague had c3,000 members, Velim 3,035) in 1883 (Dvořák & Dvořák 2006: 230).

<sup>4</sup> Due to increasing conflicts between the two language groups of the Czech lands, Charles University was divided in 1882 into a German and a Czech university, both with the name Imperial and Royal Charles-Ferdinand University, after 1918: Charles University. This situation ended in 1945 with the closure of the German-speaking university. The situation was comparable with the division of the Catholic University of Louvain in a Flemish and a French university in 1963.

<sup>5</sup> Kraus had a good passive knowledge of Dutch and wrote the article on Dutch literature in the renowned *Ottův slovník naučný* [Otto's Encyclopaedia], the most important Czech encyclopaedia. In the 1930s, he edited several Czech-Dutch yearbooks.

<sup>6</sup> Mourek was a German philologist as well and wrote the article on Flemish literature in *Ottův slovník naučný*.

<sup>7</sup> Pseudonym of Emil J. Frida. He was a very renowned Czech poet as well who translated several Flemish poems into Czech and was the first Czech to be nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature.

<sup>8</sup> Zubatý was the second Rector of Czech Charles University after the First World War.

## The First Steps Towards Science

Over the following years, he taught these languages in temporary jobs at secondary schools in Třebíč (1908–1909), Časlav (1909–1910) and Litomyšl (1910–1912). He was finally given a permanent position at the Jirásek Gymnasium in Prague<sup>9</sup> in 1912. His thorough mastering of German and Dutch resulted in a lectureship of German at the Česká vysoká škola technická (Technical University) of Prague in 1916, to which a lectureship of Dutch – historically the first in the history of Czechoslovakia – was added in 1918 at the same university.

Kalda was consequently asked by the new Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs to translate on a regular basis articles from the Dutch press. As Kalda (1967: 97) stated himself, his wife Maria Kalda née Nešporová, who he married in 1913, always helped him with his translations. This inspired him to become the first Czechoslovak sworn interpreter of Dutch in 1919, in which function he interpreted regularly for the Court in Prague. He also functioned since then as external interpreter for Foreign Affairs, and was, for example, present at the festivities on the occasion of 250 years after the death of Comenius in Naarden in 1921.

During the years 1911–1920, he began his academic career by publishing regularly articles on Dutch and Afrikaans, most of them being the very first published in the Czech language. Among the most important were his article *K nizozemské deklinaci* [On Dutch Declination] (1914), *Vlámské písemnictví a jeho poměr k nizozemštině* [Flemish Literature and its Relation to Dutch] (1917) and his analysis of the work of the important South African poet Louis Leipoldt (1921), this being the first Czech philological article on Afrikaans. His articles caught the attention of Josef Janko, the main editor of the periodical *Časopis pro moderní filologii* [Journal for Modern Philology] and professor of German Philology at Charles University, who proposed that Kalda write a habilitation thesis on Dutch language and literature (Schwanzer 1954: 45; Kalda 1967: 99).

## Establishment of the Dutch Lectureship in Prague

Kalda defended at Charles University in Prague his dissertation *Západogermánská flexe se zvláštním zřetelem k nizozemštině* [West German Flexion with a Special Reference to Dutch]<sup>10</sup> in 1921 and held his inaugural speech on Flemish Literature of the Nineteenth Century (Kalda 1967: 99). After his habilitation, he was named Docent (Associate Professor) for Dutch language at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University, and after his second habilitation for German in 1924, Associate Professor for that language as well. Apart from his professorship at Charles University, he continued teaching at the Technical University until the summer term of 1936 (Kalda 1966: 78).<sup>11</sup> As Kalda recalled, the ‘Hollandists’ at the Technical University were mostly students of architecture, electrical engineering and agriculture. The students at Charles University were in the regular curriculum for German Philology with a focus on Dutch.

When his former teacher Arnošt Kraus established the Scandinavian and Dutch Institute at Charles University as a separate institute of the Faculty of Arts in 1930, Kalda was co-founder as

<sup>9</sup> The secondary school was founded in 1880 by order of Emperor Francis Josef I as one of the first Czech language secondary schools in Prague.

<sup>10</sup> The original is no longer present at Charles University. The copy present at the Department of German Studies of Comenius University in Bratislava was lost during a fire set on 4 April 1945 by the departing German troops in the building of the Rector’s Office and Faculty of the Arts (Pauliny 1969: 322). An abstract was published, however, in Kalda (1923).

<sup>11</sup> When the Technical University was split up in 1933 into different, more specialized, universities, Kalda continued at the University for Commerce (Vysoká škola obchodní), the part where practical language studies were located (Kalda 1966: 78).

responsible for Dutch. Kalda's role in establishing Dutch Philology in Czechoslovakia cannot be underrated. Thanks to his function as official interpreter for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he met several important academics from the Netherlands: the linguist and dialectologist Jac van Ginneken, S.J. (1877–1945), the Medievalist Frank Lulofs (1919–2003) and the Slavist Nicolaas van Wijk (1880–1941). These contacts were important for the beginning lectureship and served to link Charles University with the Netherlands. Through his friend and colleague Otokar Fischer (1883–1938), Professor of German Literature at Charles University and an important literary critic, he made an acquaintance with Jozef Vercoullie (1857–1937), the most important Flemish linguist of that time and Professor at the University of Ghent.<sup>12</sup>

Kalda was above all a linguist and only translated a Dutch literary work once.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, he had a good knowledge of literature as well, and during his engagement at Charles University wrote some hundred entries on Dutch and Flemish writers in three encyclopaedias, the most important of them being the continuation of the renowned *Ottův slovník naučný* [Otto's Encyclopaedia].

## Establishment of the Dutch Lectureship in Bratislava

In 1919, Kalda's brother Rudolf Kalda (1886–1954) became Evangelical Superintendent and military preacher in Bratislava. Kalda consequently visited Bratislava several times, where that same year Comenius University was founded. When a chair for German Philology was established in 1927, Kalda moved with his wife to Bratislava, became extraordinary professor of German and Dutch, and built out of nothing a complete department of German Studies, being its first head. In 1931, he was named ordinary professor for both languages. Over these years, he published most of his articles, mainly on a comparison of German, Dutch and Slovak.

Kalda was a linguistic jack-of-all-trades. When the first Bratislava Professor of English Philology and founder of Czechoslovak Celtic studies Josef Baudiš (1883–1933) suddenly died in 1933, Kalda took over his lectures, being now academic teacher of German, Dutch and English all at once. He became Dean of the Faculty of Arts that same year, in that period a one-year function, and in the following year 1934/35 he was Vice-Dean. Notwithstanding his many functions, Kalda continued to travel to Prague where he taught Dutch at both universities, until the political changes in 1938 made this impossible.

## During the War

As a result of more than forty years of relentless 'Magyarization' of the Slovak population since 1874, hardly any educated Slovaks were able to hold positions in administration, health service or education (Chorvát 2018: 77). Up until 1930, some 120,000 mostly young Czechs came to help build up Slovakia. This created a new problem: when finally enough young Slovaks acquired the required education to hold middle and higher positions, they were occupied by Czechs who still

<sup>12</sup> Of particular interest is the fact that in the *Album amicorum* for Vercoullie's birthday (70 years) in 1927, out of the only six foreign academics who wrote a paper for the album there were three Czechs: Otokar Fischer (also a member of the honorary committee), František Kalda and Rudolf J. Vonka (1877–1964), former attaché of the Czechoslovak embassy at the Hague and one of the main translators of Dutch written literature into Czech.

<sup>13</sup> On the occasion of the three hundredth anniversary of the birth of the internationally renowned Jewish-Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677), Kalda was requested by the Czech Academy of Sciences to translate Spinoza's *Korte Verhandeling van God, de mensch, en deszelvs welstand* [A Short Treatise on God, Man and his Luck], a Dutch written treatise which was discovered in the nineteenth century (Kalda 1967: 99).

had many years before their retirement. Thus, in 1930, only some 25% to 35% of all employees in the administration or officers in the army in Slovakia were Slovaks. The Czechs, forming just 3.5% of the population in Slovakia, occupied two thirds to three quarters of all the higher and middle rank positions. In education, the percentage of Slovak teachers was already some 80% (Chorvát 2018: 80–81).

After gaining autonomy in October 1938, Slovak authorities began to expel Czech citizens from all positions. Some 63,000 Czechs were forced to leave Slovakia (Chorvát 2018: 90–91). At Comenius University, out of 72 full professors, 57 were Czech, one of them being Kalda. In November 1938, 26 Czech professors were fired (Chorvát 2018: 87). This was the moment when Kalda had to choose between keeping his position at Charles University in Prague or staying in Bratislava. Kalda and his wife remained in Bratislava.

One of the professors who had to leave Bratislava was, however, the Jewish Czech Otokar Vočadlo (1895–1974), founder of the Chair of English Studies at the university. Kalda was consequently asked to take over the leadership of the chair next to his function as head of the Chair of German Studies. The fact that Kalda held these positions without being forced to join the reigning nationalist Hlinkova slovenská ľudová strana (Slovak People's Party, founded by the priest Andrej Hlinka) or similar organizations provides evidence of his moral and academic authority.<sup>14</sup> During those years, Kalda focused on linguistics and translation theory.

### Kalda's Last Years

After the liberation, Kalda remained in his position as full professor of German, Dutch and English, the English Department now being formally merged with the German Department. When the study of Dutch after 1949 was intensified and became two specialisations – one for future teachers of Dutch and one for academics, this was the occasion to ask the now sixty-five-year-old Kalda to hand over the leadership of the department to a younger person.<sup>15</sup> Kalda began to give some lessons in Frisian as well because, as he remarked, this language was some kind of link between Dutch, German and Danish (Kalda 1967: 79).

At the age of 75, Kalda finally retired in Bratislava. He decided to return with his wife to Prague and began to teach at his *alma mater*, thus enabling Dutch Studies at Charles University to gain the rank of a regular field of study. Over the following years, Kalda prepared his young assistant Olga Krijtová (1931–2013) to become his successor. In April 1969, Kalda was forced to interrupt his lessons because of illness. On 7 May 1969, the eighty-five-year-old Nestor of Czech and Slovak Dutch Studies died (Krijtová 1970: 152).<sup>16</sup>

### Conclusion

The importance of František Kalda Jr. as founder of Czechoslovak Dutch Studies cannot be underrated. He was the first Czech to teach Dutch as an academic language, the first practical teacher of Dutch, the first sworn interpreter, the first academic to publish linguistic articles on Dutch and the first who discussed Flemish and Dutch literature *in academia*. Thanks to him,

<sup>14</sup> We should be aware that Kalda and his wife remained practising members of the Evangelical Church as well during their lifetime, a fact that was not considered 'true Slovak behaviour' at that time. The HSLS was deeply Catholic.

<sup>15</sup> The fact that Kalda was a typical representative of the pre-War 'bourgeois' academy, was a practising evangelical and held official academic positions during the Slovak State also certainly played a role.

<sup>16</sup> For the situation in Prague after Kalda, see the article of Pavlína Knap-Dlouhá and Kateřina Křížová in this issue.



Dutch studies were established at Charles University in Prague, now a century ago, and as well at Comenius University in Bratislava, 95 years ago next year. Although forced to function from 1939 and 1948 respectively under two totalitarian regimes, Kalda managed to stick to his academic principles, without being affected by the totalitarian ideologies, and preserved active contacts with the Low Countries.

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<sup>17</sup> His last address, according to this lexicon was Bozděchova 1, Praha 5 Smichov.

<sup>18</sup> His address in Bratislava was Čelakovského 2, Bratislava.

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# The Development of Dutch Studies in Prague after Kalda

**Abstract** | The paper provides an overview of the development of Dutch Studies in Prague, which is celebrating one hundred years of its existence in 2021. The situation in Prague, after the departure of Prof. Kalda for Bratislavam, is briefly described in the first part. The second part focuses on the development of Dutch studies in the second half of the twentieth century. The third part is devoted to a description of the situation at the turn of the twenty-first century. The last part deals with Dutch Studies in Prague after 2015.

**Keywords** | Dutch studies, Charles University Prague, Historiography, Olga Krijtová, Přemysl Janota

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## Introduction

The oldest of the Czechoslovak Dutch Studies institutes has, over the course of its existence, experienced better and worse times. A number of outstanding teachers and scholars, who have worked or are still working there, should have the credit for celebrating the centenary of the Dutch Studies in Prague. This article first briefly mentions the personalities who contributed to the development of Dutch Studies in Prague after the departure of its founder, Professor Kalda to Bratislava. We subsequently focus on the activities of the Dutch Studies Institute in Prague in its modern history.

## The situation after the departure of Kalda to Bratislava

After historical circumstances forced František Kalda (1884–1969) to end his work in Prague in 1938 and remain in Bratislava, Prague Dutch studies at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University fortunately did not disappear. The Dutch language was taught there by the Dutch lecturer

J. W. Weevers (1911–1961) up until the closure of Czech universities by the German occupiers in November 1939 (Engelbrecht 2009: 62–63).<sup>1</sup>

The Czech linguist, specialist on English Studies and co-founder of the famous Prague Linguistic Circle, Prof. Bohumil Trnka (1895–1984), made a significant contribution to the development of Dutch Studies in Prague in this period. Before the outbreak of the Second World War he wrote, together with L. J. Guittart (1882–1949), a secondary school teacher of Dutch from The Hague, the first Czech textbook of Dutch, called *Učebnice holandštiny se slovníkem* (Dutch Textbook with a Dictionary; 1939). In addition, as Engelbrecht (2009: 62) points out, his students included two important personalities of the post-war Dutch Studies in former Czechoslovakia – the future professor Přemysl Janota (1926–2008) and the future associate professor Olga Krijtová (1931–2013).

After the reopening of Charles University in May 1945, J. M. Vorrink, who had already taught Dutch before the war during her studies of Slavonic languages, started working in Prague as a Dutch language teacher. After the coup in February 1948, however, she left Czechoslovakia and her teaching of the Dutch language was taken over by Přemysl Janota, who had previously attended her courses with interest (cf. Janota 2000).

In the 1950s, Hans Krijt (1927–2011), who – as Petra Schürová (2002) points out – deserted the Dutch army in early 1948 because he refused to take part in the colonial wars in Indonesia, also worked in Prague as a Dutch lecturer. He came via Belgium to Czechoslovakia, where he, after studying at the Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (FAMU), worked as a documentary filmmaker for Czechoslovak Television. He married a Dutch Studies specialist, Olga Fuchsová, later Krijtová. Krijt is the co-author of several publications, including the pocket Czech-Dutch and Dutch-Czech dictionary.<sup>2</sup> He also devoted his time to the field of interpreting and translating Czech literature into Dutch.<sup>3</sup>

## The flourishing of Dutch Studies in Prague in the second half of the twentieth century

Professor Přemysl Janota and associate professor Olga Krijtová contributed to the greatest development of Prague's Dutch Studies in the second half of the twentieth century. Mainly thanks to their great efforts and perseverance, in the milestone year of 1968, Dutch became a full-fledged field of study at the first university in former Czechoslovakia (Engelbrecht 2009: 64). It could be studied in combination with another language, which was – with a few exceptions – previously not possible. It was initially opened within the framework of a five-year philological study programme at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University once every four years.<sup>4</sup>

Přemysl Janota (1926–2008) studied English and Philosophy at Charles University in Prague, and later also logopedics. He took Dutch courses and left soon after the war for the

<sup>1</sup> After the closure of Charles University, J.W. Weevers returned to the Netherlands. After the end of World War II, he defended his PhD thesis in Leiden and subsequently taught Dutch in Melbourne from 1946 to 1948 (Engelbrecht 2009: 63).

<sup>2</sup> The authors of the first edition of the pocket dictionary entitled *Van Goor's klein Tsjechisch woordenboek* (Van Goor's small Czech dictionary; 1976) were Hans Krijt and Olga Krijtová. There was a second edition entitled *Woordenboek Tsjechisch-Nederlands, Nederlands-Tsjechisch: met een beknopt overzicht van de Tsjechische grammatica* (Dictionary Czech-Dutch, Dutch-Czech: with a concise overview of Czech grammar; 1984) with contributions by Hans Krijt and Přemysl Janota.

<sup>3</sup> Hans Krijt summarised his memories concerning more than fifty years of life in former Czechoslovakia in his book *Enkele reis Zaandam–Praag* (Single Trip Zaandam – Praag; 2001).

<sup>4</sup> The Dutch alternated with Scandinavian languages in those days (Krijtová 1973: 58).

Netherlands as a volunteer with a group of students to help rebuild the Dutch island of Walcheren (cf. Janota 2000, Engelbrecht 2010: 239). He then took the opportunity to study for a year at the *Gemeentelijke Universiteit van Amsterdam* [Municipal University of Amsterdam] (today's *University of Amsterdam*), where he was taught Phonetics and Dutch Studies by one of the most important representatives of experimental phonetics, professor Louise Kaiser (1891–1973). This fact undoubtedly contributed to his lifelong interest in phonetics and Dutch. Janota's work entitled *Onderzoek betreffende de kwantiteit van de Tsjechische en Nederlandse klinkers* [Research Concerning the Quantity of Czech and Dutch Vowels] (1947) also dates from this period. After his return to Prague, Janota was asked by the departing Dutch lecturer, J. M. Vorrink, to take over the teaching of Dutch courses at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University. In 1950, he completed his doctoral studies in the field of phonetics and linguistics with a thesis entitled *K otázce dynamiky řeči* [On the Question of the Dynamics of Speech]. He was consequently employed at the Logopedický ústav [Institute of Logopedics] in Prague and as of 1957 at the Fonetický ústav [Phonetic Institute] of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University. He still continued teaching at Prague's Dutch Studies.

The combination of these two fields – Phonetics and Dutch – was a great pleasure for Janota throughout his whole academic career (Janota 2000). His scholarly activity was mainly in the field of phonetics and logopedics.<sup>5</sup> Janota also constructed a number of very useful phonetic tools and later became the vice-president of the International Society of Phonetic Sciences, a member of the International Society of Logopedics and Phoniatics, and a member of the *Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde* [Society of Dutch Literature] in Leiden. (Engelbrecht 2011:167) After her retirement in 1958, the Dutch professor L. Kaiser even proposed him as her successor at the Phonetic Institute in Amsterdam, but the reluctance of the Czechoslovak authorities meant that for political reasons Janota did not learn this fact until many years later (cf. Růžicková-Hronová, 1998; Engelbrecht, 2011: 163). Since he was not a member of the Communist Party, he was also prevented from lecturing in Nijmegen and from participating in some foreign symposia. For this reason, he also did not officially become a professor at Charles University until 1990. Z. Palková (1996: 322) states in her article devoted to the jubilee of Prof. Janota:

He was asked several times to take over the management of a foreign phonetic institute (in Amsterdam, Hamburg, Nijmegen), but never received the approval of the then Czechoslovak authorities and he did not want to leave his country illegally. It was very fortunate, however, for the Czech field of phonetics that he did not leave.<sup>6</sup>

This was also a blessing for Czechoslovak Dutch Studies. Růžicková-Hronová (1997: 17) concludes that Prof. Janota “was the first to lecture on Dutch at the university level at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University”.<sup>7</sup> This outstanding phonetician provided instruction in various linguistic subjects for the Dutch Studies in Prague. He patiently taught the students correct pronunciation and was the author of a number of teaching materials, such as *Vývoj nizozemského jazyka* [The Development of Dutch Language] (1985), *Fonetika a fonologie nizozemštiny*

<sup>5</sup> Palková (1996: 323) mentions in her contribution that in honour of Prof. Janota's seventieth birthday, a special issue of *Phonetica Pragensia IX: Charisteria Přemysl Janota oblata* was published (AUC, Philologica 1, 1996), to which 32 authors from ten countries contributed and which also contains Janota's bibliography.

<sup>6</sup> Několikrát byl požádán, aby převzal řízení zahraničního fonetického pracoviště (v Amsterdamu, v Hamburku, v Nijmegen), nikdy však nedostal souhlas tehdejších československých úřadů a opustit svou zemi ilegálně nechtěl. Pro českou fonetiku bylo ovšem velké štěstí, že neodešel.

<sup>7</sup> Profesor Dr. Přemysl Janota [...] začal na filozofické fakultě Univerzity Karlovy jako první přednášet o nizozemštině na vysokoškolské úrovni.

[Phonetics and Phonology of Dutch] (1986) and *Gramatika nizozemštiny* [Grammar of Dutch] (1987). He also dealt with the Dutch language within the context of his academic publications, e. g. *Fysiologische en pathologische vormen van kinderspraak* [Physiological and Pathological Forms of Child Speech] (1959), *Persoonlijke eigenschappen in de spraak* [Personal Characteristics in Speech] (1974), *The Dutch Language in the Work of J. A. Comenius* (1979), *De uitspraak van het Nederlands* [The Pronunciation of Dutch] (1985), *Uw en mijn ervaringen met het gebruik van computers bij het onderwijs van het Nederlands* [Your and my Experiences with the Use of Computers in the Teaching of Dutch] (1988) or *Nederlandse woorden in een Tsjechische mond* [Dutch Words in a Czech Mouth] (2001). Moreover, together with H. Krijt, he published the handbook *Tsjechisch en Slowaaks op reis* [Czech and Slovak on the Move] (1976) and the pocket dictionary *Woordenboek Tsjechisch-Nederlands, Nederlands-Tsjechisch met een beknopt overzicht van de Tsjechische grammatica* [Dictionary Czech-Dutch, Dutch-Czech: with a concise overview of Czech grammar] (1984). He is also the author of a handbook for Czechs entitled *Nizozemština: dovolená? Vezmi mě s sebou* [Dutch: a Holiday? Take me with you] (1994).

The leading Czech specialist in the field of Dutch Studies and the excellent literary translator, Olga Krijtová, born Fuchsová (1931–2013) belonged to the first group of enthusiastic students who attended the Dutch language course led by Janota (Janota 2000: 7). From 1950–1955, she studied English and Dutch at Charles University and for the next almost fifty years she taught primarily literature and translation at Dutch Studies in Prague. After leaving the Communist Party and spending a year with her family in the Netherlands, after the events of the Prague Spring, she was prevented from further academic advancement (she did not receive her associate professorship until 1991) and she had to deal with various prohibitions and restrictions (cf. Růžicková-Hronová 1997). Despite all the hardships, she was the soul of the Prague's Dutch Studies throughout her whole life and inspired a number of graduates who still remember her with gratitude and admiration.<sup>8</sup>

Under the leadership of Olga Krijtová, Dutch Studies in Prague managed not only to overcome some difficult years, but also to achieve the position of an independent section within the Department of German Studies. At a time, when it was very difficult for both teachers and students to travel to the Netherlands or Belgium, Dutch Studies in Prague focused mainly on literature and translation. This was matched by Olga Krijtová's publishing activities as she wrote many articles concerning Dutch and Flemish literature.<sup>9</sup> In addition, her literary translations contributed significantly to the formation of an awareness of Dutch literature in Czechoslovakia in the post-World War II period. (Engelbrecht 2010: 240)<sup>10</sup> It was also very important that Krijtová always stimulated her students to actively engage in translation. There were a number of literary translators from Dutch among her former students, such as Petra Schürová (\*1948), Ruben Pellar (\*1949), Jana Červenková, born Klímová (\*1952), Jitka Růžicková, born Hronová (\*1961), Veronika ter Harmsel Havlíková (\*1972) or Jana Pellarová (\*1972).

Krijtová was also very active in her teaching activities. Together with her teacher and later colleague, Bohumil Trnka, she published a revised edition of the aforementioned *Učebnice holandštiny* [Textbook of Dutch] in 1962, and published a completely revised version of this book under the title *Učebnice nizozemštiny* [Textbook of Dutch] in 1968.<sup>11</sup> Krijtová is also the

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, the memoirs of Dutch Studies students published in the newsletter NE-BE (2001: 8).

<sup>9</sup> Olga Krijtová's extensive bibliography is to be found in the special issue of the *Praagse Perspectieven* [Prague Perspectives] (Krol & Sedláčková, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Special attention to O. Krijtová's activities in the field of translation are devoted in this thematic issue to Kostelecká and Horáčková's contribution entitled *Literary Translations After the Velvet Revolution*.

<sup>11</sup> This textbook went through several more editions in the following years. The 2008 edition was co-authored by graduate Jana Červenková.

author, of among other things, *Čítanka nizozemských textů* [The Dutch Text Reader] (1964), the *Česko-nizozemská konverzace* [Czech-Dutch Conversation] (1978) and a textbook on Dutch and Flemish culture and history. Her most important publications after 1989 include the first treatise on Dutch literature published in Czech under the title *Průvodce dějinami Nizozemské literatury* [A Guide to the History of Dutch Literature] (1990, together with her husband H. Krijt) or a treatise on translating literary texts (*Pozvání k překladatelské praxi* [Invitation to Translation Practice], 1996).<sup>12</sup>

Olga Krijtová has received a number of awards for her great contribution to translatology and Dutch Studies, including the Dutch *Martinus Nijhoff Prijs* for translators (1969), the honorary membership in the *Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde* [Royal Academy of Dutch Language and Literature in Ghent] (1986–2007) and the Dutch royal decoration *Officier in de Orde van Oranje-Nassau* (2001). She has received for her literary translations among other things *Cena Josefa Jungmanna* [Josef Jungmann Prize] (2005), the *Magnesia Litera Award* and the *NLPVF-vertalersprijs* (2007). (Kluková et al. 2017: 32)

Among the other important teachers of Prague's Dutch Studies of this period, the well-known Czech historian Josef Polišenský (1915–2001), who taught the history of the Low Countries there from the 1960s, should also be mentioned. Polišenský is the author of numerous publications on world history and was long involved in Dutch history and Czech-Dutch relations. His publication *The Tragic Triangle. The Netherlands, Spain and Bohemia 1617–1621* (1991) has, according to engelbrecht (2010: 240), significantly influenced the Czech view of Dutch history.

After his retirement in 1959, the founder of Dutch Studies in Prague, František Kalda (1884–1969) also returned to Prague. As professor emeritus, he taught Dutch there on an external basis practically until the end of his life (Růžicková-Hronová 1997: 16).

## 1 Dutch Studies in Prague at the turn of the twenty-first century

After the Velvet Revolution in 1989, contacts with foreign countries were gradually restored and cooperation with foreign universities and experts was established. Teachers and students could finally travel freely. In this context, the support of the *Nederlandse Taalunie* [Dutch Language Union] was also important for the continued existence of Dutch Studies in Prague. Since 1994, due to the great interest of students, the field of study has been opened every two years as part of a two-subject master's degree programme. At the same time, however, the system of financing universities changed in the 1990s and a 1998 law introducing bachelor and master's studies was introduced. All these changes also affected, positively or negatively, Dutch Studies in Prague, where professor Janota, associated professor Krijtová and professor Polišenský were still active.

As of 1992, the ranks of teachers were extended by Zdenka Hrnčířová (1940–2021), who first studied English, Dutch and Czech studies at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University and then completed her postgraduate studies in the field of mathematical linguistics in 1968. She worked as a translator, assistant professor for foreign language teaching and, before joining *Ústav germánských studií na FF UK* [Institute of Germanic Studies at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University], she supervised the teaching of Dutch at *Státní jazyková škola* [State Language School] in Prague for a long period of time. As a linguist, Hrnčířová specialised mainly in lexicology and lexicography. She worked for several years with the leading Czech linguist, František Čermák (\*1940), a graduate of Czech Studies, English and Dutch Studies in Prague as well, on

<sup>12</sup> An updated edition of this publication, supplemented with three chapters by Veronika ter Harmsel Havlíková, was published in 2013.



a Dutch-Czech dictionary, which they finally managed to publish in 1989.<sup>13</sup> Hrnčířová mainly published articles related to the above-mentioned area of her interest, e. g. *Metafoor in het Tsjechisch en het Nederlands – eenheid in verscheidenheid* [Metaphor in Czech and Dutch – United in Variability] (2000), *Contrastieve analyse van neologismen in het Nederlands en het Tsjechisch* [Contrast Analysis of Neologisms in Dutch and Czech] (2001) or *Somatische fraseologische uitdrukkingen in het Nederlands en het Tsjechisch* [Somatic Phraseological Expressions in Dutch and Czech] (2004).<sup>14</sup> She was also actively involved in a number of projects. One of them was a very large project focused on the creation of parallel synchronous corpora for Czech and other languages called InterCorp.<sup>15</sup> Even after her retirement, however, Hrnčířová did not stop focusing on Dutch – the result is her Dutch language textbook published under the title *Nizozemština (nejen) pro samouky* [Dutch (not only) for Self-taught Learners] (2020).

There was a change in the position of the head of Prague Dutch Studies in 1996 – Olga Krijtová was replaced by Dr. Zdenka Hrnčířová. A year later, Prague Dutch Studies celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, together with almost a hundred foreign experts, colleagues from other Dutch Studies and other guests, by organising a very successful congress on the theme of *Nizozemsko, Vlámko a Česká republika, kontakty v průběhu staletí* [The Netherlands, Flanders and the Czech Republic, Contacts over the Centuries]. The congress was also met with great interest from the embassies of Belgium, the Netherlands and South Africa in Prague, the ambassador of the Czech Republic in the Netherlands accepted the invitation to the congress and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts of Charles University took over the patronage of the event (Hrnčířová 1997). In the 1990s, Hanny Visser and Aukje Spoelstra were lecturers at the Prague Dutch Studies. Jesse Ultzen and Wiert de Vries later worked there, for example, as lecturers.

Olga Krijtová retired in 2001. She continued to be, however, a very willing and active supporter of Dutch Studies in Prague and helped where needed, even though she did not teach there directly. A period of uncertainty and searching began for Dutch Studies in Prague. Dr. Hrnčířová (2002) sums it up as follows:

After the retirement of associate professor O. Krijtová and the return of drs. Aukje Spoelstra to the Netherlands, the department faced a difficult time, especially in securing qualified teaching of literature.

In addition, the department lacked a personality with the academic rank of associate professor or full professor, and the faculty could not offer potential candidates for a job at the Prague Dutch Studies very interesting financial compensation. In the end, however, a solution was found and the field was secured and stabilized in terms of personnel. Associate professor Ellen Krol, an expert in nineteenth century literature, began working in the department, teaching literature in intensive blocks.<sup>16</sup> In addition, at her initiative, the first year of a two-day conference called

<sup>13</sup> An expanded edition of the most comprehensive Dutch-Czech dictionary to date was published again in 1997, 2000 and 2005.

<sup>14</sup> A brief biography of Z. Hrnčířová and a list of her publications is to be found, for example, on the website <http://germanold.ff.cuni.cz/personal/hrncirova?is=ned>

<sup>15</sup> The synchronous parallel corpus *InterCorp*, which is part of the *Czech National Corpus*, is constantly being expanded and updated – see <https://wiki.korpus.cz/doku.php/en:cnk:intercorp>. Apart from Dr. Hrnčířová, Eliška Boková (\*1975), a graduate of Prague Dutch Studies, a translator and interpreter, has been actively involved in the development of the Dutch *InterCorp* corpus since the beginning of the project.

<sup>16</sup> Ellen Krol received her habilitation in Germanistic literature at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University Prague in 2009 for the habilitation thesis: *Er was niets dat niet veranderde* [There was nothing that did not change]. See her curriculum vitae on the website [http://germanold.ff.cuni.cz/docs/cv/krol\\_2013-03.pdf](http://germanold.ff.cuni.cz/docs/cv/krol_2013-03.pdf).

*Praagse Perspectieven* [Prague Perspectives] was organized in 2002. Over the following years, a total of ten editions of this autumn congress were successfully organized. The congress was always accompanied with a rich cultural programme and the papers were subsequently published in peer-reviewed proceedings under the title *Praagse Perspectieven* [Prague Perspectives].<sup>17</sup> In 2011, a special issue of this collection was dedicated to the personage of O. Krijtová on the occasion of her significant jubilee.<sup>18</sup>

The lecturer Nienke van de Waal, who taught the language acquisitions courses and was specialized in historical language, was among the colleagues of Hrnčířová and Krol. Together with an external colleague, Professor Guy Janssens from the University of Liège (Belgium), she also taught courses focused on language development. Janota also worked there on an external basis, teaching phonetics and phonology (Hrnčířová 2002: 10). The very successful translators Veronika ter Havlíková and Petra Schürová have also collaborated with Prague Dutch Studies on a part-time basis. Both of these graduates of Dutch Studies in Prague are very active members of *Společnost pro nizozemskou a vlámskou kulturu NE-BE* [Society for Dutch and Flemish Culture NE-BE], which was founded by specialists in Dutch Studies and people professionally involved in Dutch in Prague in 1999.<sup>19</sup>

Although Dutch Studies in Prague may not have all that visible at the turn of the twenty-first century and had to deal with many challenges, it lived a very intense life (cf. Hrnčířová 2002, 2008). Interest in the study of Dutch Studies was still high. It was possible to study Dutch Studies as a major, a master's course, that opened every other year. The focus of the study programmes was generally philological and students had the opportunity to spend a semester at a foreign university within the framework of the Erasmus and Ceopus programmes. Courses in Dutch were also offered for students from other study programmes of the Faculty of Arts. The Department also collaborated very intensively with a number of experts from domestic and foreign Dutch Studies institutes. The staff of Dutch Studies participated in various international research projects, e.g. *Business Dutch*, *Studia imagologica (cooperation with the University of Amsterdam)* or *Oude drukken in de bibliotheken van Polen en Tsjechië [Old Prints in the Libraries of Poland and the Czech Republic]* (in cooperation with the universities in Wrocław and in Olomouc).<sup>20</sup>

## 2 Recent developments – Dutch Studies in Prague after 2015

The Department of Dutch Studies of Charles University in Prague is currently part of the Institute of Germanic Studies at the Faculty of Arts. The Dutch language can be studied here as part of the bachelor's programme in Germanic and North Germanic Studies with a specialisation in Dutch and, as of 2020, also as a follow-up master's programme in Germanic and North Germanic

<sup>17</sup> The last year of the *Praagse Perspectieven* [Prague Perspectives] colloquium took place in 2014. For the proceedings published on this occasion, see <https://neerlandistiek.nl/2016/04/verschenen-praagse-perspectieven-10/>

<sup>18</sup> Olga Krijtová. *Geschrift eener bejaarde vrouw uit 1997* [Writings of an Elderly Woman from the year 1997]. Special issue of *Prague Perspectives* (Krol – Sedláčková, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> The aim of this society is to bring together those interested in culture, history and social events in the Netherlands, Belgium and other countries where Dutch is one of the official languages. The society organises various lectures and literary evenings, maintains a Dutch library, publishes a bilingual newsletter, promotes the publication of translations of Dutch and Flemish literature and maintains contacts with the embassies of the Netherlands, Belgium and South Africa. For more detailed information about the NE-BE Society and its activities, see the website [https://www.ne-be.cz/o\\_nascz.html](https://www.ne-be.cz/o_nascz.html).

<sup>20</sup> <http://germanold.ff.cuni.cz/page/nederlandistika-vyzkum>

Studies with a specialisation in Dutch Studies.<sup>21</sup> From 2020 onwards, Dutch can only be studied in combination with another study programme. In addition to the core study programmes, the Department of Dutch Studies also provides an open language course in Dutch for non-major students.

After the departure of Zdenka Hrnčířová in 2015, Lucie Sedláčková (\*1980), a graduate of English and Dutch Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, took over the leadership of the Department of Dutch Studies. In 2011, Lucie Sedláčková defended her PhD thesis on *Globalisering in de hedendaagse Nederlandse roman* [Globalisation in the Contemporary Dutch Novel] (her supervisor was Ellen Krol). Her research was focused mainly on the following areas: representation of globalisation in literature; cultural transfer between the Dutch and Czech environment (circulation of Dutch theatre in the Czech lands; cross-cultural authors); representation of animals, vegetarianism and ecological themes in literature. From 2012 to 2015, she participated in the international research project Circulation of Dutch Literature.<sup>22</sup> She has been involved in the Kreas<sup>23</sup> project, specifically in the Strategic Regions programme since 2018.

In 2014, another dissertation entitled: *De Story van Twee Talen Grammaticale beschrijving en analyse van intrasententiële codewisseling tussen het Nederlands en het Engels* [The Story of Two Languages Grammatical Description and Analysis of Intrasentential Code Exchange between Dutch and English] was defended at the Institute of Germanic Studies by Jana Rezková and supervised by Professor Jan Pekelder. Pekelder has been involved in the functioning of the Prague Dutch Department from 2008–2020, and in addition to it, he was a professor of Dutch linguistics at the Sorbonne in Paris. Up until 2016, the teaching of translational subjects was provided by Professor Jana Rakšányiová, whose home university was Comenius University in Bratislava. In 2017, Marcel Ištván defended his dissertation on *Application of Text-optimization Techniques and their Influence on Adequate Text Comprehension*.

After the departure of Lucie Sedláčková for parental leave in 2019, the historian Dr. Irena Kozmanová took over the management of the Prague Dutch Studies Department. Kozmanová (\*1983) studied history, political science, teaching and Dutch studies at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. In 2015, she defended her double-degree dissertation entitled *Ideologische Intervention in der Frühen Neuzeit* [Ideological Intervention in the Early Modern Period] at the Universities of Prague and Antwerp, in which she examined the behaviour of the country in the monarchical court public using the Netherlands as an example.

Her scholarly research focuses on an analysis of the Dutch political system in the seventeenth century, the role of the Peace of Westphalia in connection with international relations and political argumentation.

Practical Dutch teaching is provided by Twan Zegers, M.A. His predecessor was Albert Gielen, who provided practical Dutch teaching over the years 2015–2019. Yves T'Sjoen (Modern Flemish Literature), Iva Rezková (Dutch Linguistics), Marcel Ištván (Textual Linguistics), Anna Krýsová (Dutch Literature), Martina Vokáčová (Morphology and Syntax) and a number of PhD students also currently contribute to the teaching. One of them is Michal Kořenář, who combines knowledge and methods from cognitive psychology, linguistics and neuroscience in his interdisciplinary experimental research. He is currently involved in a Marie Curie project at the University of Reading where he is investigating the functional link between creativity, inhibition

<sup>21</sup> For more detailed information, see the website of Prague Dutch Studies <https://germanic.ff.cuni.cz/cs/ustav-katedra/o-nas/nederlandistika/>.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.huygens.knaw.nl/projecten/circulation-of-dutch-literature-codl/>.

<sup>23</sup> <https://kreas.ff.cuni.cz/>.



and brain structure in bilingual speakers. Several external staff members are also involved in teaching, e.g. Iveta Coufalová, Marta Kostecká, Jana Pellarová and Claudia Zeller.

The benefit of the field is high internationalisation – language teaching is conducted by a native speaker from the first year onwards, students in the upper years have the opportunity to meet foreign specialists during their guest lectures in Prague, and they can also go study at one of the partner universities (Amsterdam, Leiden, Utrecht, Ghent, Brussels, Antwerp) as part of the Erasmus study programme. In addition, the department also assists its students in arranging supervised internships.

In 2021, the Department of Dutch Studies was able to regain certification for the international language certificate *Certificaat Nederlands als Vreemde Taal* (CNaVT) [Dutch as a Foreign Language Certificate]. In May 2021, the first exams have already taken place. The CNaVT exam can be taken here in five proficiency levels, from beginner (A2) to advanced (C1).<sup>24</sup>

In 2018, the sixth Central European DoHa Colloquium took place in Prague. At this conference, Dutch studies scholars from Central Europe presented their ongoing research as part of their doctoral studies or habilitation. Their papers were published in *AUC Philologica* 2018/4.<sup>25</sup> On the occasion of the centenary celebrations, Prague's Dutch Studies will host the eighth edition of the Cross-Over Travelling International Literary Congress in November 2021.<sup>26</sup> The theme of this year's edition will be *Legitimiteit en diversiteit. Neerlandistiek nu en morgen* [Legitimacy and Diversity. Dutch Studies Now and Tomorrow]. The conference will focus on topics in political, cultural and social discourses that help shape the meaning and development of linguistics and literary studies.

Prague Dutch Studies has long profiled itself as a modern research institute that follows current developments and regularly presents itself on social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram). On these platforms, various events, debates, lectures and other Dutch-related meetings are announced. The department organises the European Day of Languages, for example, a language festival with a rich programme for hundreds of visitors.<sup>27</sup> The aim of this day, initiated by the Council of Europe, is to spread awareness of the linguistic diversity of the European continent among its inhabitants and inspire them to study foreign languages. The Department of Dutch Studies is also involved in the publication of the literary journal *Tijdschrift 21* [Journal 21].<sup>28</sup> Students in the department edit and translate various literary texts and ensure their physical and online publication.

Concrete projects that students can take on during their studies are also interesting initiatives. An example of this is the opportunity to be involved in a specific translation project, whether in a literary or audio-visual form. One of the most noteworthy projects is the translation of the Dutch children's television series *Mees Kees*, the second season of which was translated by Filip Frantál, a student of Prague's Dutch studies, under the Czech title *Super třída*. The series is regularly broadcast by Czech Television.<sup>29</sup> Frantál works as a research assistant at the Department of Dutch Studies and also participated in the student translation of the book *Together "Through the Avenue of Europe"* [in orig. *Samen op de laan van Europa*] in 2019.<sup>30</sup> The project was created to commemorate the centenary of Dutch-Czech-Slovak diplomatic relations between 1918 and

<sup>24</sup> For more information about CnaVT, see: <https://cnavt.org/het-examen-nederlands>.

<sup>25</sup> <https://karolinum.cz/casopis/auc-philologica/rocnik-2018/cislo-4>.

<sup>26</sup> For more information on the Cross-Over Conference, see <https://ned.ff.cuni.cz/cs/2021/06/03/cross-over-2021-in-praag-cfp/>.

<sup>27</sup> <https://ned.ff.cuni.cz/cs/2018/09/22/evropsky-den-jazyku-2018/>.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.21-magazine.org/blog-nl/>.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/12466547985-super-trida/>.

<sup>30</sup> <https://ned.ff.cuni.cz/cs/2019/05/28/prezentace-knihy-spolu-aleji-evropy/>.

2018, and students not only from the Prague Dutch Studies Department but also from departments at the universities of Brno, Olomouc and Bratislava contributed with their translations. Frantál is currently translating his first book.

Kateřina Bezecká is the second research assistant of the department. Bezecká is involved in the organisation and preparation of the international literary congress Cross-Over 2021 and the implementation of the international literary and translation project *Tijdschrift 21*.

With the support of a student research scholarship, she implemented the project *Children's Literature and LGBT* in the academic year 2019/ 2020. She followed up on this project with her bachelor thesis, in which she focused on the representation of LGBT role models in contemporary Dutch children's and young adult literature and investigated how reading fiction affects children's emotional and social literacy development and reduces prejudice.

## Conclusion

Thanks to the tremendous efforts, perseverance and diligence of the above-mentioned personalities of Prague Dutch Studies, but also thanks to all its alumni and supporters (e.g., the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Prague, the Belgian Embassy – Representation of the Flemish Government in the Czech Republic, the Dutch-Czech Chamber of Commerce and others), despite various obstacles, it has been possible to build a strong Dutch Studies Department Prague. Although it is a field that can build on a long tradition, one should also speak of it as a field with a clear vision and future. The current members of the academic staff of Prague Dutch Studies are actively building on this tradition, especially in the fields of translatology and linguistics.

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## Dutch studies at the Comenius University since the 1990s

**Abstract** | This article provides an overview of the most important developments in Dutch Studies in Slovakia after the accreditation of the study program in the 1990s. It focuses on the important personalities who contributed to the founding of the department and shaped its international standing and scientific focus. The paper also maps didactic and scientific activities, international projects, and cooperation of the department with key partners in Slovakia and abroad. It concludes by outlining the perspective of the development of Dutch Studies in Slovakia in the context of the current criteria for the accreditation of small languages and the status of Dutch in Slovakia.

**Keywords** | Dutch studies, Low Countries Studies, Translation Studies, Curriculum Development, Intercultural communication

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### Introduction

The traditional view that Dutch Studies has aimed at training linguistically and interculturally competent experts in the field of Dutch language and culture is widened by the intensive economic political and cultural ties of the Low Countries with Central Europe. People working outside the borders of the Low Countries have different starting positions and motivations and goals to immerse themselves in this interdisciplinary specialization. As a Slovakian contribution to the broader interlingual and sociocultural context across borders, we also see the search, discovery, and analysis of phenomena, in which both our own and the personalities of the science and culture of the Low Countries have participated. We do not see Dutch Studies as a one-way direction but as a means of mutual intercultural enrichment (Rakšányiová 2007, 99).

The Dutch department in Bratislava is the first and one of the few departments of Dutch Studies extra Muros specialized in translatology since its establishment. Although a significant part of the study program is oriented towards specialized public service and legal translation, the study of the scholarly tradition in the field of literary translation in Slovakia and various projects of the department provide students with an incentive to immerse themselves in literary translation. Through smaller practical translation assignments and intensive supervision of an experienced literary translator, they acquire the basic skills that can be further developed in practice (Bossaert 2015a, 50).

The Department of Dutch Studies develops intensive international scientific and pedagogical cooperation within the framework of research projects with related departments in neighbouring

countries as well as in the Netherlands and Belgium. Within the *Studia Nederlandica Universitatis Comenianae Bratislavensis* series, it has published 7 publications, created literary-translation databases, glossaries, participates in the cross-border joint degree program, participated and co-ordinated international projects, and is involved in the creation of innovative didactic materials.

In the next sections, in line with the introductory description of the university historiography of Dutch Studies at Comenius University in Bratislava by Benjamin Bossaert, we offer a brief overview of the discipline after 1990 with an emphasis on the subject matter of the study and its graduates, the local and international embedding of the Department of Dutch Studies and significant results of scholarly research and projects.

## Development of Dutch Studies at the Comenius University in the 1990s

As Benjamin Bossaert in his introductory article pointed, date the origins of Dutch Studies at Comenius University back to the pre-war period, mainly in the person of prof. František Kalda. The Slovakian person who within the possibilities of that period of political isolation, really did the maximum for the spreading of the Dutch-language culture, was Júlia Májeková (1919–1991). This Germanist and Slovakian was inspired by Kalda's lectures on Dutch and after the war had the opportunity to complete her education in Leiden in the Netherlands. Thus, between the 1950s and the 1980s, she became the only competent translator from Dutch into Slovakian. She became the editor of the renowned publishing house Tatran in Bratislava and translated 28 works of Dutch literature (e.g. De Vries, Multatuli, Timmermans, Vestdijk, Coolen, Mulisch, Claus). Májeková was crowned with the highest Slovakian award for translators Cena Jána Hollého (The Ján Hollý Prize, 1974) and with the prestigious Dutch Martinus Nijhoff Prize for Translations (1978) for her life's work (Bossaert 2018, 84).

A serious interest in the accreditation of a full study program of Dutch studies arose in the early 1990s. Shortly after the Velvet Revolution of 1989, there was nearly no one in the newly created independent Slovak republic (1993) to translate professional and administrative documents, to interpret, to work qualified in the newly founded Dutch and Belgian companies, and institutions, in the framework of cultural exchange. The current head and founder of the department of Dutch Studies in Olomouc (Czech Republic) Wilken Engelbrecht came to teach a Dutch language course for interested students and established contacts with Nederlandse Taalunie in Den Haag, which as a cultural institution for the development of the Dutch language support establishing and developing Dutch Studies extra Muros. Engelbrecht worked physically in and for Bratislava until 1994. The lectureship was taken over by Abram Muller, a Dutchman living in Bratislava. He took over the position of a native speaker and acquired in September 1996 the specialist in the development of the curricula Dutch Studies extra Muros Paul van den Heuvel (Rakšányiová 2008, 117).

That is when the new history of the independent profession began to be written. Jana Rakšányiová, associated professor of German studies, translator of German, Swedish, Danish and Dutch did the preparatory work for the accreditation of this new study program. The new curriculum was in 2007 approved by the accreditation committee of the Slovak Republic. Interest in the field has always been enormous. As Rakšányiová (2016) mentioned in her memoirs about the development of Dutch Studies in Bratislava in the academic year 1996/1997 about 430 applicants applied for the new combinations in translation-interpreting English Language and Culture/Dutch Language and Culture, German Language and Culture/Dutch Language and Culture. The periodicity of the graduated in the combination with Dutch language and culture continued each second year with 8 up to 15 new graduates and reached in 2020 the number of

about 150 graduated specialists in Dutch and Translation Studies. The department now has five doctoral graduates in the field of Dutch language and culture.

## Roots of the translational embedding of the study

The newly established department in Bratislava was unique in that it had a translation and interpreting study focus. Already in the 1960s translation studies began to emerge as a separate discipline and the beginnings of theoretical translation studies were heralded by James S. Holmes, Gideon Toury, Theo Hermans, José Lambert, André Lefevere, Hendrik van Gorp, Raymond van den Broeck, Itamar Even-Zohar, Jiří Levý, and the leading Slovak researcher of translation theory and literary translation Anton Popovič, among others. These contacts ensured the qualitative and quantitative development of literary translation in Central Europe, especially in Slovakia. The social and ideological situation in those days was because of the iron curtain completely different from today. The contacts and cooperation stated as the by Hermans (1999) called “Invisible College”. The international research group was able to introduce an original way of thinking into Translation Studies. Their semiotic approach to translation, the polysystem theory, Descriptive Translation Studies, and the Manipulation School have remained enduring ideas in the context of the modern concept of translation (Rakšányiová & Štefková 2014, 13).

Jana Rakšányiová as a scholar of Anton Popovič lent her expertise in translation studies to the department of Dutch Studies and ensured its continuity. She worked previously at the invitation of Anton Popovič in the Department of Theory of Translation and Interpreting. She became particularly active as a translator of Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish literature. In total, she translated more than 30 novels, dramas, and children's books. Several of her translations won prestigious translator awards. As a practicing translator, she was for many years President of the Slovakian Association of Literary Translators, a member of the Committee for Professional and Scientific Translation in the Literary Fund, co-organizer of the Summer School of Translation, and Translators' Universiade for students.

The creative atmosphere and inspiring research projects, but in particular the guidance of the world-famous translationalist, have nevertheless characterized her subsequent academic career. She followed the work of James Holmes, Gideon Toury, Raymond van den Broeck and Jose Lambert with great interest and applied the theory, which was based on literary criticism and focused mainly on literary translation, to the translation of specialized texts, a special perspective and productive area of translation practice, which initially remained forgotten within translation theory.

Jana Rakšányiová combined the critical reflection of the famous *skopos* theory with the foundations of Popovič's translation theory and reflects on new trends in the development of modern technology with a feeling for current problems. As a visionary, she points out aspects, which ten years later the use of these technologies has brought with it: the need for knowledge management, the need for localization of business texts given the function and host culture. Her research focuses on translation transfer and the translation process as a transcultural phenomenon as well as on translation didactics. More than 150 scientific contributions, dissertation, and habilitation on rational, aesthetic, and ethical aspects of the translation made her a renowned and respected translation theorist. Her academic and pedagogical career was supported by numerous scholarly activities and publications, internships, research, and observation visits. In 2009, she was appointed Professor of Translation and Interpretation by the President of the Slovak Republic. In addition to her Alma Mater, she held a part-time appointment at the department of Dutch



Studies of the Charles University in Prague and was regularly invited as a visiting professor of translation studies at Palacký University in Olomouc.

In the initial stage of profiling of the department undoubtedly a significant influence on the department's focus on literary translation the addition of Adam Bžoch. He studied German and Dutch studies in Leipzig and defended his dissertation on Walter Benjamin and the reflection of aesthetic modernism. In 1996–1999 he lectured at the newly established department of Dutch studies in Bratislava on the history of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch literature and led a translation seminar. Since 2002 he has also been a lecturer of Dutch language at the Department of German Studies of the Faculty of Arts of the Catholic University in Ružomberok. He started translating from Dutch as a scientific aspirant of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava. He translates mainly works from North Dutch literature, his favourite period being the interwar period, which is also evident from his translated works to date. He is the author of the translation of one of the most famous, most read, and most translated works, originally written in Dutch, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, for which he won the Jan Hollý Prize (1997). He has also translated numerous works by well-known Dutch writers such as Johan Huizinga, Ferdinand Bordewijk, Harry Mulisch, Jan Wolkers, Louis Couperus, and others (Štefková & Ter Harmsel-Havlíková 2015, 23–30).

## The study program – structure, aims, and objectives

The study program Dutch language and culture are oriented towards intercultural professional communication, based on the linguistic, translational, and transcultural competence of the graduates.

The Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Dutch Language and Culture is a modern study program with an emphasis on the employment of graduates. The student is systematically prepared for the demands of contemporary practice, acquiring a theoretical basis and practical skills in the application of knowledge of the Dutch language and knowledge of the culture, political and social situation, literature, and history of Dutch-speaking countries (especially the Netherlands and Belgium) in a wide range of intercultural, professional and economic communication. Oriented in the socio-cultural, political, and economic situation of this important region, the graduates can communicate in the spheres of intercultural and economic exchange and after completing the master's degree to work as a translator, interpreter, editor, intercultural mediator, etc. Studying at the academic level provides them with the skills to apply in a wide range of social practices. In semesters 1–4, students acquire language skills through intensive language exercises with native speakers, acquire basic grammar and develop communicative skills in Dutch. At the same time, they are introduced to the phonetic level of Dutch and develop their vocabulary accordingly. They acquire knowledge of the language, history, political and economic realities, media, history, and Dutch literature. From the 5<sup>th</sup> semester onwards, language skills are deepened and translation skills in the field of professional texts and the basics of interpreting competence are gradually developed, which are further enhanced in the Master's program.

From the second year onwards, project-based courses are included in the study program, in which students develop teamwork, discover the basics of scientific research, intercultural communication, and the popularisation of knowledge about the Dutch language area, and learn the role of intercultural mediators using modern technologies, social networks and the contacts of the Dutch Studies Department with the Dutch-speaking community in Slovakia. Examples of intercultural projects are the processing of the reception of literature of Dutch-speaking countries into Slovak on the department's website, the preparation of an exhibition and medallions of translators of Dutch literature into Slovak, or the processing of Dutch borrowings in the Slovak

language (see as an example the site Reception of Dutch and Flemish literature in Slovakia: <https://www.kgns.info/recepcianl/>) (Homola 2018, 89).

## Research and Projects

The Department develops intensive international scientific and pedagogical cooperation within research projects with related departments in neighboring countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary) as well as in the Netherlands and Belgium.

One of the first international projects is the Culture 2000 – *Literatuur in context* – an international project to make personalities of national literature available for translation in Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia. It is involved in the cross-border study program Joint Degree *Dutch Language, Literature and Culture in a Central European Context* (DCC), which is a new way supports curriculum development between seven Central European universities and an internationally valid diploma. Between 2007 and 2009, the department was involved in the TST-ID project (Language Technologies and Methods for Promoting Intercultural Dialogue) focused on the development of computer processing technologies for teaching texts.

The first international project initiated and coordinated by the department in the person of Marketa Štefková is the Erasmus+ project *Professional Accessible Community Interpreting – a gateway to migrants integration* (2018–2020). It is based on the results of field research of translation in the legal domain. The research in Slovakia showed a lack of sworn translators and interpreters in among others the Dutch language and the graduates have little interest in certification as a sworn translator. The graduates of these courses have an excellent knowledge of the language and culture, often including basic training in interpreting and translation, but almost no understanding of PSIT and no knowledge of the domains and the practical execution of the assignments within PSIT. The aforementioned findings were the first impulse to create a strategic partnership – based on the background of the coordinator – within the network of institutions teaching the Dutch language and culture in Central Europe together with the partner from Belgium – a country with a well-developed and institutionnalized structure of the so-called social interpreting. The project aimed to develop a training program for interpreting and translation in the public sector for the Dutch language, to motivate students to delve more deeply into these sub-domains of PSIT (Bossaert 2020, 137–139).

The currently running project DLBT, *Digital Library and Bibliography in Translation* is initiated by the Dutch studies department of the University of Vienna and Wrocław University. It has been established as a continuation of the DLIT, *Dutch literature in translation*, a cooperation with the Vienna University Library. Comenius University is, in the person of Benjamin Bossaert, the partner to study the reception of Dutch literature in Slovakia. The idea to create a digital library and bibliography for literature in translation and to focus on reception studies has emerged from research projects of the department of Dutch studies, amongst others, in Vienna, Olomouc, and its DCC partners.

## Local and international networks

The Department of Dutch Studies is involved in a wide international network of universities teaching Dutch, and so students have the opportunity of foreign scholarships, summer language courses, study stays, which are available to every student. The support of the Dutch Language Union allows the department to provide students with access to superior technology, terminology



tools, language technology, excursions, contacts with students of the same field in Central Europe. The limited number of students in the group allows for a personal approach and the building of collegial relationships in a small group of students.

Intensive practical and theoretical training is provided by local university teachers, lecturers, and visiting professors from the Netherlands and Belgium. Students have the opportunity to receive scholarships for the summer language courses and research summer schools, ERASMUS and CEEPUS scholarships for study at the Central European departments of Dutch Studies (Vienna, Wrocław, Prague, Budapest, Brno, Olomouc) in the Low Countries (Utrecht, Leiden, Antwerp, Brussels, Leuven).

Other organizations were also important, such as the Orde van den Prince, the Prince Bernhard Fund, the embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and later the Flemish representation in Central Europe. They provided us with information, donated our equipment, equipped the library, and thus created the material basis for a space that over time acquired its atmosphere and also a good reputation among its peers, such as the Lessius Hogeschool in Antwerp or CETRA in Leuven.

## Future perspectives

For already more than twenty years, the Dutch department has been committed to spreading and presenting the Dutch language and culture in Slovakia. The year 2016 has been very special. The department celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the accreditation of a full Master's program and the Netherlands and Slovakia alternated the presidency of the European Union. The department saw an important added value in their academic, scientific, and pedagogical work to participate in the organization of core activities in the Dutch-Slovakian relations at the cultural level and thus present the best of Dutch culture in Slovakia as a coherent project over the year 2016. These exceptional events were a springboard to focus the attention of the general public on the Dutch language and culture in Slovakia.

The years 2017–2020 were years of self-reflection, in which the department had to deal with the emeritation of prof. Jana Rakšányiová meeting the new stricter requirements for the accreditation of Dutch Studies and the consequences of the necessity of distance education during the coronary crisis. Both of these circumstances, however, have prompted initiatives to develop the department in terms of the number of habilitated staff, the expansion of the scientific focus on intercultural management, and the development of new didactic aids that will enable a more professional approach to online teaching. As part of a didactically oriented project, the department plans to publish three textbooks in the next three years and to inaugurate and habilitate two members of the department.

All these steps are aimed at consolidating the position of Dutch Studies at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Bratislava and the continuous presence of the Dutch language and culture in Slovakia.

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## Dutch Studies in Moravia

**Abstract** | This article traces the history and development of the two Moravian Dutch Studies departments, the Department of Dutch Studies in Olomouc and the Dutch Studies Section in Brno from their establishment to the present. We divide the history into three periods and trace the development of the scholarly profile and focus of both departments. We are also looking for points where the history of Moravian Dutch Studies intersects and what their importance is in international Dutch Studies. We look in detail at important publications, projects and dissertations to demonstrate the scope of topics covered by these departments.

**Key words** | Dutch Studies, Brno, Olomouc, history, development

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### Introduction

There will be a focus on the history and development of two Moravian Dutch Studies, the Department of Dutch Studies at the Faculty of Arts of the oldest Moravian university, Palacký University in Olomouc, and the Dutch Section at the Institute of Germanic, Nordic and Dutch Studies at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University. Both Dutch Studies were founded after the Second World War, alongside the one in Prague – the second oldest Central European Dutch Studies department – and their development was influenced by the post-war events connected to Communist restrictions. The modern post-revolutionary history, however, is marked by co-operation and a certain interconnection, not only between Moravian Dutch Studies, but also between Dutch Studies in Czechoslovakia and internationally. One should mention the cooperation within the ONETS<sup>1</sup> association of Dutch experts, the Central European association of Dutch experts called Comenius or various international projects.

In October 1997, a congress entitled *Vijftig jaar neerlandistiek in Moravië in duizend jaar betrekkingen met de Lage Landen* (50 Years of Dutch Studies in Moravia in One Thousand Years of Relations with the Low Countries) was held in Brno and Olomouc, initiated by the Flemish lecturer Leopold Decloedt (Brno/Vienna) and by Wilken Engelbrecht (Olomouc). At that time, the launch of two new curricula, namely a five-year Master's degree programme in Dutch Philology in Olomouc and a three-year Bachelor's degree programme in Brno, was one of the reasons for the celebration (Decloedt & Engelbrecht 1999a:13; Engelbrecht 2008a: 99). At this congress, visions for the development of Dutch Studies were presented, both in terms of creating the academic profile of the two rising departments and in terms of international cooperation.

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<sup>1</sup> A detailed article by Bas Hamers is dedicated to the history of ONETS.

Eighteen years later, Olomouc and Brno Dutch Studies organised together the *Regionaal Colloquium Neerlandicum voor Centraal-Europa, Jubileumcongres van Comenius* (Regional Conference of Dutch Studies in Central Europe, Jubilee Congress of Comenius), celebrating two important anniversaries, namely the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Charles V's accession to the throne as heir to the Burgundian lands (the present Low Countries in fact), and a second anniversary, celebrating twenty years of the existence of the association of Central European Netherlandists, called Comenius (Kostecká & Royeaerd 2015: 3–4). This important congress was organised by two self-confident, established Moravian Dutch Studies, the only independent Department of Dutch Studies in the Czecho-Slovak context together with the Dutch Section in Brno. Let us now look closer at the history of these departments, involving a journey from the first idea to teach this still obscure language to certain people to established academic departments. The history of the two Moravian Dutch Studies can be divided into three periods. The period of establishment, in both of which a certain coincidence played a role, the period of building the departments, and the modern history.

## Dutch Studies in Olomouc

In 1946, Palacký University was reopened with Jozef L. Fischer (1894–1973), who had been hiding in Amsterdam for part of the war, as its rector. It was he who initiated the opening of a lectureship in Dutch in Olomouc, whose first lecturer and founder was the Slavic scholar Aimé van Santen (1917–1988).<sup>2</sup> Van Santen worked in Olomouc from 1947 to 1951. He was expelled from the country in 1951 because he was disliked by the Communist regime. The lectureship remained vacant until 1968, when an attempt was made to reopen Dutch Studies during the Prague Spring, but this was not finally achieved until the 1990s. (Engelbrecht 2010: 243–244).

In the post-revolutionary academic year 1990–1991, Wilken Engelbrecht (\*1962), a medievalist, came to former Czechoslovakia for a postgraduate study stay to do research on Ovid's manuscripts for his future PhD dissertation (Engelbrecht, 1999: 8). The gradual changes in university personnel, the change in the political climate and the related orientation of universities towards Western languages provided an ideal opportunity for Dutch Studies. Engelbrecht was in the right place at the right time, and in 1990 helped build up Bratislava Dutch Studies at Comenius University in Bratislava,<sup>3</sup> where he was also teaching Medieval Latin seminars (Engelbrecht, 1999: 73). That same year he also re-established Olomouc Dutch Studies. One could argue that the imaginary second period of the existence of Olomouc Dutch Studies began at this point.

Between 1990 and 1995, Engelbrecht<sup>4</sup> was the only lecturer and member of the Dutch Section, which was then part of the Department of German Studies. He assembled the research library and focused on the creation of a philological programme, of which the teaching of translation and interpretation was an integral part.

In 1994, the Flemish lecturer Leopold Decloedt (\*1964) joined the Dutch Studies section in Brno and, together with Engelbrecht, helped build up the international character of Czech-Slovak Dutch Studies. In that same year, the ONETS platform was founded, promoting cooperation between the Dutch Studies departments of both countries. In 1995, the regional *Colloquium*

<sup>2</sup> For more about Aimé van Santen, see Engelbrecht (2008: 99) and Engelbrecht (2010: 243–244) or the magazine *Ne-Be*, Engelbrecht (1999: 8).

<sup>3</sup> Articles by Marketa Štefková and Benjamin Bossaert discuss the development of the Bratislava department in further detail.

<sup>4</sup> With the exception of 1991, when Engelbrecht was back in the Netherlands to acquire a certificate to teach Dutch as a Foreign Language at Utrecht University.

*Neerlandicum voor Centraal- en Oost-Europa* (Congress of Dutch Studies in Central and Eastern Europe) was held in Olomouc, during which the Comenius association was founded (Engelbrecht 2008b:140 & Kostelecká 2019a: 60).

In 1995/6, a three-year Bachelor's degree programme in Dutch as a minor opened for the first time, and two more staff members, the Flemish lecturer Theo Puttemans (1950–2017) and the South African lecturer Edna Deudney-Prinsloo (\*1930), joined Dutch Studies for a short period. Thanks to Deudney, an elective course in Afrikaans was offered in Olomouc, and thanks to Rudolf Uvíra (\*1933), it was also possible to study Frisian as an elective course until his retirement (2015). Afrikaans and Afrikaans literature were consequently taught by Lianne Barnard (\*1967) from 1999 until 2017. Barnard focused on Dutch, Afrikaans literature and gender literature (Engelbrecht, 2008b: 146 & Engelbrecht, 2010: 245).

In the year 1997, a five-year Master's degree programme in Dutch Philology was opened. The Olomouc Faculty of Arts also offered a unique possibility to freely combine two disciplines. In addition, Engelbrecht received the ANV Visser-Neerlandia Prize as the founder of the Bratislava and Olomouc Dutch Studies and for his work in the development of Czech-Slovak Dutch Studies in general (Engelbrecht, 1999: 85–87 & Engelbrecht, 2008: 140). In that same year, one of the two editions of the *Central European Course in Frisian* was held in Olomouc, at a time when it experienced extensive flooding. Pumps and journalists came from the Netherlands to help solve the situation, alongside the Frisian teacher. The efforts were crowned by the Olomouc City Prize in 1998. In that same year, the Dutch section was also extended with an external lecturer, later assistant professor Eva Brázdová Toufarová (\*1975), who specializes in the theory and teaching of interpreting and Dutch literature for children in translation, and an assistant professor Magdalena Chládková (\*1975), who moved to Great Britain after her marriage.

The Department of German Studies was also officially renamed the Department of German and Dutch Studies in 1998 (Engelbrecht 2008b: 142). That same year, Engelbrecht became a member of the Frisian Academy in Leeuwarden, was admitted two years later to the Leiden-based *Maatschappij der Nederlandse Letterkunde* (Society of Dutch Literature), and became a member of the *Suid Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskappe en Kuns* (South African Academy of Sciences and Arts) in 2015.

In 1999, the Dutch Studies Section also accredited a single-subject Bachelor's degree programme in Dutch with a focus on economics. The programme alternated in even years with philological studies in odd years. In 2000, Milan Kříž (\*1975), who is a didactician, joined as an assistant and later as an assistant professor of language teaching. He completed his PhD studies at the University of Utrecht in 2014 with a dissertation entitled *Zes praktijkvoorbeelden van effectief NVT-onderwijs in Centraal-Europa* (Six Case Studies of Effective Teaching Dutch as a Foreign Language in Central Europe), published in 2016, tutored by Huub van den Berg of Utrecht University and Gert Rijlaarsdam of the University of Amsterdam, and Bas Hamers (\*1971) as a lecturer, later assistant with a focus on practical Dutch. One year later the linguist Kateřina Křížová (\*1975) joined the department, currently assistant professor, Dutch and Czech Studies expert, scientific secretary of the department dealing with phraseology and corpus linguistics. Křížová completed her PhD in 2005 with the dissertation *Noun Phraseologisms from a Contrastive Point of View on Dutch, Czech and German Material*.<sup>5</sup> The section organized two summer courses of international importance in 2002.<sup>6</sup>

On 5 September 2003, Dutch Studies officially became the first independent Department of Dutch Studies in the Czech Republic with Wilken Engelbrecht as head, and with an extensive

<sup>5</sup> The supervisor was Josef Jodas at the Department of Czech Language Studies UP.

<sup>6</sup> Topics in Dutch and Flemish Painting and Introduction to European Conference Interpreting Dutch-Czech.

research library, and consequently entered its third historical period. In addition to Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes, the department also offers the so-called rigorous examination involving obtaining the degree of PhDr. (Kluková et al. 2017: 35). In June of the same year, Engelbrecht defended his dissertation, *De Bursarii super Ovidios van Magister Willem van Orléans* (The Bursarii Super Ovidios of William of Orléans), at the University of Utrecht in the field of medieval studies. In 2005, he habilitated in the field of literary theory with a dissertation entitled *Recepce římských spisovatelů ve školském prostředí renesance 12. století* (The Reception of Roman Writers in the School Environment of the Renaissance of the Twelfth Century; published 2009) at Palacký University in Olomouc. The establishment of the Department of Dutch Studies as an independent department provided the opportunity to employ graduates and cover a wide range of academic interests (Engelbrecht, 2010: 245). In 2005, Lucie Smolka-Fruhwirtová (\*1979), a Dutch and Czech language scholar, began her PhD studies in the field of literary theory at the Department of Czech Language Studies and Dutch Studies, focusing on the reception of Dutch literature in the Czech Republic and literary translation. In 2011, she defended her dissertation entitled *Recepce nizozemské literatury v českém literárním kontextu let 1945–2010* (The Reception of Dutch Literature in the Czech literary context in the years 1945–2010), which was also published as a monograph (2011). Smolka-Fruhwirtová worked as an assistant professor at the department, until she received the position of chief editor at the publishing house Zlín in 2015. In 2006, Pavlína Knap-Dlouhá (\*1978) joined the PhD program, with a focus on professional translation and legal Dutch and interpreting. Knap-Dlouhá is currently an assistant professor who qualified with the thesis *Nederlandse, Duitse en Tsjechische rechtstaal in vergelijking aan de hand van de terminologie van kamers van koophandel* (A Comparative Study of the Language of Business Law from the Point of View of the Translator) at the Department of German in 2012. Both theses were supervised by Engelbrecht.

Martina Vitáčková (\*1982) also worked briefly at the department, and under Engelbrecht's supervision defended her dissertation "*Back to the Roots*". *Forming New Concepts of Women's Identity in Contemporary Postcolonial Literature Written by Women in Dutch and Afrikaans* (2011, published as a monograph in 2011) in the field of literary theory. From 2008 to 2013, she worked as an assistant professor and later as a researcher, contributing to the *History of Dutch and Flemish Literature* (see below), as well as a literary translator. She continued in 2013 with a post-doc at UNISA in Pretoria, South Africa. Veronika ter Harmsel-Havlíková (\*1972) completed her PhD in literary theory in 2011 with the dissertation *De eerste Nederlandse pop-artroman. Analyse en interpretatie van Ik jan Cremer* (The First Dutch Pop-art Novel. An Analysis and Interpretation of I Jan Cremer). Both theses were supervised by Wilken Engelbrecht.<sup>7</sup> Ter Harmsel-Havlíková taught at the department between 2010 and 2015, as a PhD student, assistant and later as an assistant professor. She moved with her husband to the province of Friesland in the Netherlands several years ago, where she is a full-time literary translator from Dutch to Czech.

The width of the topics covered demonstrates the scholarly direction of the department; the scholarly profile covers translation, interpreting, contrastive linguistics and literature (Engelbrecht 2010: 245), gender studies, business Dutch and, in the case of Engelbrecht's professional interest, the reception of Dutch literature in the Czech Republic.

The year 2017 is significant for Czech Dutch Studies, as Wilken Engelbrecht managed to accredit and open a PhD programme in Dutch Philology. This meant that students of Dutch

<sup>7</sup> Benjamin Bossaert (\*1985) defended his dissertation supervised by Engelbrecht in literary theory in 2020. The title was *Literary and Historical Representations of Two National Rebels: Jan De Lichte (Flanders) versus Juraj Jánošík (Slovakia)*. In the academic year 2021/2022 it is expected that Markéta Kluková (\*1989) will defend her dissertation focusing on the use of articles by Czech speakers of Dutch.



have the opportunity to study postgraduate Dutch Studies directly and are not forced to pursue a PhD programme in another department and field and can focus directly on Dutch philology. The Department of Dutch Studies started offering a one- and two-subject Bachelor's degree in Practical Dutch Philology with a follow-up Master's degree in Dutch Philology that same year. As part of the nationwide transition of the disciplines to a study programme, the departments then offered the BA and MA programmes in the form of a major and a minor.<sup>8</sup>

The staff of the Department of Dutch Studies has been relatively stable since its establishment. Over the period of existence of the independent department, several lecturers and trainees have been hired to help with teaching practical language or professional subjects according to their specialization.<sup>9</sup> Various professors have also contributed to the professional formation of the department, to name a few: Stefan Kiedroń (University of Wrocław), Jos Wilmots (University of Hasselt), Jana Rakšányiová (Comenius University in Bratislava), Marcel Janssens (KU Leuven) (Kluková 2017: 36) and further Božena Czarnecka (University of Wrocław) and Iwona Piotrowska. Since 2017, Hubert van den Berg (Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań) has become a core staff member as a reinforcement for doctoral studies. His professional interest is avant-garde literature.

A separate chapter could be devoted to the projects and internationalisation of the Department of Dutch Studies, but let us be concise here. The Department of Dutch Studies has organised and co-organised several important Dutch Studies congresses, has participated in the organisation of exhibitions and is involved in many projects of international importance.

Mention should be made of a regional colloquium dealing with the didactics of Dutch in Central and Eastern Europe: *Didactiek van de Nederlandse taal en cultuur in Midden- en Oost-Europa* (Didactics of Dutch Language and Culture in Central and Eastern Europe; 1995), as well as the aforementioned congress *50 jaar neerlandistiek in Moravië* (1997). Also worthy of mention is the congress organised on the occasion of the exhibition at the Olomouc Museum of Art: *Olomouc Picture Gallery II – Dutch Painting – Emblematica et Iconographia. Themes in the Painting and Literature of the Low Countries from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (2000). Students from Wrocław, Prague and Olomouc also took part in a translation competition which was part of this congress (Engelbrecht 2001: 6).

In 2005, on the occasion of the department's independence, a congress was held on aspects of Dutch language teaching outside the Netherlands and Belgium called *Aspecten van de extramurale neerlandistiek*. In 2010, the Department of Dutch Studies held a congress for Central European PhD and habilitation students in Dutch Studies entitled *Neerlandistische Ontmoetingen – Treffpunt Olomouc* (Nederlandistic Encounters – Meeting Point Olomouc).

An important milestone, where the history of Olomouc and Brno intersected once again, was the organisation of the aforementioned congress *Regionaal Colloquium Neerlandicum voor Centraal-Europa, Jubileumcongres van Comenius*. In addition to the Dutch congress, two large-scale exhibitions were also held, the conception and realisation of which was mainly the work of Wilken Engelbrecht. These were the exhibition *The World's Baroque Book Store – Netherlands Old Prints from the 16<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries from Collections of the Scientific Library in Olomouc* at the Archdiocesan Museum in Olomouc and the exhibition *The Low Countries in Orders and Medals* at the Moravian Museum in Brno. The third exhibition was opened at the Department of Dutch Studies and was entitled *In Tsjechische tongval. Literaire vertalingen*

<sup>8</sup> In 2010–2014, it was possible to study the MA programme *Tolken en vertalen Nederlands als B-taal* (Interpreting and Translating Dutch as a B-language) in cooperation with the Hoger Instituut voor Vertalers en Tolken in Ghent, and the MA programme *Business Dutch Philology* (2010–2013).

<sup>9</sup> The list together with the list of guest professors can be found in Engelbrecht 2008: 146–153.

*van Nederlandse en Vlaamse literatuur in het Tsjechisch* (In the Czech Tongue. Czech Literary Translations of Dutch and Flemish Literature) which presented a survey of literary translations from Dutch into Czech (Kostelecká & Royeaerd 2015: 3–4).

Mention should also be made here of additional important projects of the Department of Dutch Studies. The Department of Dutch Studies has been cooperating with Vienna on the project *European Literature Heritage in Context* from 2002 to 2005 and since 2005 it has been involved in the project *Dutch Language, Literature and Culture in a Central European Context* (DCC). (Engelbrecht 2008b: 139–145) Members of the Department of Dutch Studies and the Dutch Studies Section are also involved in the CODL-project (Circulation of Dutch Literature) project. (CODL website).

Other important achievements of the Department of Dutch Studies include projects that have resulted in the publication of *Capita Selecta nizozemské lingvistiky* (Capita Selecta in Dutch Linguistics; 2017) (IGA project) a Czech-written collective monograph covering the latest developments in Dutch linguistics, *Grammaticale en Lexicale Oefeningen Nederlandsvoor Vertalers en Tolken I–IV* (Grammatical and Lexical Exercises in Dutch for Translators and Interpreters I–IV; 2015), which, together with the Brno-based monograph *A Contrastive Description of the Standard Pronunciation of Dutch and Czech from the Perspective of Czech Learners of Dutch* (2019), form the Czech-written *Academic Grammar of Dutch*, which was produced between 2010 and 2019 as a project of the Dutch Language Union and two Moravian Dutch Studies.

The Olomouc Dutch Studies team also created the Czech written *Dějiny nizozemské a vlámské literatury* (History of Dutch and Flemish Literature), published at Academia in Prague (2015), tracing the most important literary developments in the Low Countries, as part of a project of the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic. The last important project was the IGA project, which resulted in the publication of *‘Leaver dea as slaaf (Raději mrtvý než být otrokem). Dějiny fríské literatury* (“Leaver dea as slaaf” (Rather Dead Than be a Slave. A History of Frisian Literature), published at Libri in Prague in 2020, edited by Benjamin Bossaert and Wilken Engelbrecht.

In addition to the inter-university cooperation mentioned above, the Olomouc Dutch Studies Department is involved in a project aimed at training interpreters in the field of small language community interpreting, *PACI – Professional Accessible Community Interpreting* (2018–2021), in which the Dutch Studies Departments in Bratislava, Wrocław, Olomouc and VUB Brussels are participating, with Kateřina Křížová and Pavlína Knap-Dlouhá as authors from Olomouc (Věda a výzkum, 2021)<sup>10</sup>.

## Wilken Engelbrecht

The coryphaeus of (not only) Czech-Slovak Dutch studies in its modern history is Professor Wilken Engelbrecht. We have already mentioned many of his achievements in the text, but let us take a closer look at his other work as well. Engelbrecht was appointed full professor of literary theory in 2012, then full professor of Dutch philology at the Catholic University of Lublin John Paul II in Lublin, Poland, in 2018. Following Professor Přemysl Janota (1926–2008), Engelbrecht is historically the second Dutch scholar to become a Dutch language professor in the Czech Republic, which is of great significance for the status of Dutch Studies as an academic discipline in the Czech Republic in general.

Engelbrecht has been head of the Olomouc Department of Dutch Studies since its establishment in 2003, with a short break between 2010 and 2011, when it was led by Milan Kříž. Wilken

<sup>10</sup> One should also mention the non-academic staff of both departments: Iva Jančíková and Dana Spěváková who belong to the administrative staff in Olomouc and Brno respectively. They help to keep up the good work.

Engelbrecht served as Vice-Dean for Foreign Affairs (2006–2010), served as Chairperson of the Academic Senate of the UP Faculty of Arts between 2002 and 2006, was a member of the UP Scientific Council between 2010 and 2014, once again Chairperson of the Academic Senate in the period 2014–2017 and a member of the Faculty Scientific Council between 2005 and 2018 (Vizitka, 2021). Engelbrecht is a member of many scholarly societies and associations of Dutch scholars, a dissertation supervisor, a dissertation referee, and a member of doctoral and habilitation committees.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to his work in Olomouc, he has also been working at KU Lublin since 2011, where he helps to develop the local Dutch Studies. He has also worked as an external lecturer at the Dutch Section in Brno (2010–2011), where he taught morphology and syntax. His professional interests are very broad, publishing in Dutch linguistics and literature, Frisian literature and classical and medieval Latin. His major interest is the reception of Dutch literature in a Central European context.

Wilken Engelbrecht has made a significant contribution to the spread of Dutch language and culture in Central Europe, not only as (re)founder of Czech-Slovak Dutch Studies, (co)founder of Dutch associations and possibilities for international cooperation, but also as an expert publishing in many areas of Dutch Studies. He is a researcher and co-investigator of many projects of international importance. In September 2012, he was honoured for his services by Queen Beatrix, who awarded him the decoration of Officer of the Order of Orange-Nassau. (Žurnálonline, 2012)

## Dutch Studies in Brno

Dutch Studies in Brno have existed continuously since 1947. Just as in the case of Olomouc Dutch Studies, a certain coincidence played a role in its establishment. Due to her marriage to a Czech, Erika Solařová-Montijn (1912–2016) became a lecturer of Dutch at the Germanic Seminary where she wanted to complete her German studies. Antonín Beer (1881–1950), one of the founders of Brno German studies, seized the opportunity to offer the Dutch language in Brno (Munzar 2019: 13–17).

Apart from teaching practical language, Solařová-Montijn also created teaching materials on literature, as well as phonetics and the correct pronunciation of Dutch, and compiled an anthology of Dutch writers. These materials have not, however, been preserved (Rampart 2008: 110). After the events of February 1948, two language courses for beginners and advanced students remained open, but interest in the language declined. In 1947–1950, Dutch was a second elective course and then between 1950 and 1955 a minor course which ended with a state exam that students could take at the Language School in Brno and receive a diploma for completing their four-year studies.

One of these students was Ems Máčelová-van den Broecke (1921–2012) (Solařová-Montijn 1997: 150; Solařová-Montijn 1999: 186; Decloedt 1999b: 67). Together with Solařová-Montijn, Leopold Zatočil (1905–1992), former head of the Department of German Studies, gave lectures on historical grammar and Medieval Dutch (Masařík 1974/5: 5–6).

According to Decloedt (1999b: 67–71), in the autumn of 1955, Dutch became once again a second minor without the possibility of passing the exam, and this state of affairs lasted until 1969, when Zdeněk Masařík (1928–2016) returned from a study stay in Groningen and received a grant to establish a Dutch library. In 1971, Josef Skopal (1916–2001), a Germanist, historian and court translator of Dutch and German, who had studied Dutch at Leiden University, took over

<sup>11</sup> See his business card at UP: <https://www.ff.upol.cz/nc/kontakty/vizitka/empid/09046/>

the lectureship.<sup>12</sup> Skopal focused on building relationships with colleagues from the Netherlands and Belgium, on building a functional library and, last but not least, on creating a Czech-Dutch translation dictionary, which he had been working on since 1973. Emmy Máčelová-van den Broecke worked with him on the dictionary. In 1983, both authors submitted the manuscript of the dictionary, which was not published until 1990.

In 1988, Skopal fell suddenly ill and retired and was followed by Emmy Máčelová-van den Broecke (1921–2012), a translator and teacher of Dutch from Zeeuws Flanders, and the spiritus agens of two editions of the Czech-Dutch Dictionary in Brno. Máčelová's goal was to make Dutch a major in Brno once again. Ems Máčelová's motto was the word "taalbrug" – a linguistic and cultural bridge between the Netherlands and the Czech Republic (Spěváková, Kostecká 2012: 7), which she carried out in her textbook of Dutch for Czechs, *Wegwijs worden in Nederlands* (Becoming Familiar with Dutch, 1997) together with her student Dana Spěváková (\*1961), co-author of the second completely revised edition of the *Czech-Dutch Dictionary*, published in 2005 by Leda; a year later the dictionary was awarded the first prize for the best translation dictionary from the Union of Interpreters and Translators. Another interesting publication is the translation of Annie M.G. Schmidt's *Viplala*, a translation by students under Máčelová's supervision. For her efforts in spreading the Dutch language and culture, Ems Máčelová was awarded the decoration of a Knight in the Order of Orange-Nassau (2001) by H.M. Queen Beatrix. Like Wilken Engelbrecht, Máčelová has also been a member of the Society for Dutch Literature since 1989 (Decloedt 1999b: 69).

The imaginary second period, delimited by the years 1993–1999, is characterised as the period of the formation of the full study of Dutch, the beginning of the academic profiling of the section and the building of the international relations of the Brno Dutch Studies. In this period, the history of the Brno section begins to intertwine closely with Olomouc Dutch Studies.

In 1994, the Flemish lecturer Leopold Decloedt (\*1964), a Germanist and Dutch scholar, joined the Dutch Studies section with a task of establishing Dutch Studies as a five-year major, which he achieved in 1999. In 1997<sup>13</sup>, Dutch was still functioning as an undergraduate third course. At that time, Dutch was offered in fixed combinations of disciplines, for example with Portuguese. Alexandra Andreasová, a PhD student of Prof. Masařík since 1997, helped with the administration of the Dutch library, pursuing her MA-degree in Olomouc.

Decloedt and his predecessor, Máčelová-van den Broecke, were aware that in addition to quality teaching and the development of teaching material, there was a need to establish cooperation not only with other departments where Dutch was taught in the Czech Republic, but also with other partners in the Netherlands and Belgium, as well as in Central Europe. Decloedt was consequently actively involved in the founding of the ONETS and Comenius platforms, participated in the organisation of the aforementioned congress *50 Years of Dutch Studies in Bohemia and Moravia*, which resulted in a special issue of the German Studies Series *Brünner Beiträge zur Germanistik und Nordistik*. At this congress, not only the history and significance of Dutch studies in the Czech Lands was presented, but also the vision of Dutch Studies for the future – see for example, Herbert Van Uffelen's contribution *Neerlandistiek in Centraal- en Oost-Europa* (Dutch Studies in Central and Eastern Europe), which represents a vision of Central European inter-university cooperation, which was fulfilled in the DCC, i. e. in a new Bachelor's degree programme in the form of a *joint curriculum*. This cooperation between the

<sup>12</sup> Between 1939–1946, he stayed in Eindhoven as a worker in the Bata shoe factory and taught children of workers of Czech origin. After his return, he started working at the German department in Brno (Rampart, 2008: 110).

<sup>13</sup> Between 1995–1997 Regine van Groningen (\*1966) taught at the Dutch Section being responsible for the practical language. She is author of a book *Dutch – A Language Guide* (1997).

universities of Vienna, Wrocław, Olomouc, Bratislava, Debrecen, originally with the Karolyi Gáspár Reformed University in Budapest and today with ELTE Budapest and Brno still works in various variations today.

The most recent period starts in 1999, when the position of Dutch in Brno began to stabilise. The structure of the Bachelor's and Master's studies has been consolidating and developing so that the focal points are an orientation on linguistics and the creation of didactic materials for language teaching along with a focus on Dutch translation.

Declodt was succeeded by the Flemish lecturer Nele Rampart (\*1972) (till 2006). The development accelerated with Dutch becoming a three-year full Bachelor's degree programme in 1999. A new position was created for Alexandra Andreasová in 2001, the first year of the Master's programme was opened, and as of 2005, Dutch can be studied as a single-subject programme, while for the double-subject programme, students can freely combine two disciplines as in Olomouc. In 2001, Dutch became a three-year Bachelor's third course and in the same year the Dutch section became an independent section of today's Institute of German, Nordic and Dutch Studies.

In 2003, the first doctoral thesis in the rising generation of Dutch scholars was defended, representing contrastive research on the modal verbs *moeten* and *mogen* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, entitled: *Die Grenze zwischen Möglichkeit und Notwendigkeit. Ein Beitrag zur semantischen Entwicklungsgeschichte der niederländischen Modalverben "moeten" und "mogen" im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert* (The Boundary Between Possibility and Necessity. A Contribution to the History of Semantic Development of the Dutch Modal Verbs "Moeten" and "Mogen" in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries). It was written by Alexandra Andreasová and supervised by Zdeněk Masařík. In the academic year 2006/2007, Andreasová (\*1973), a linguist specialising in cognitive linguistics and the translation of theatre plays, became head of the Dutch Studies section (2006–2009); the Flemish lecturer Sofie Royeaerd (\*1984), joined in 2007/2008. She specialises in teaching practical language and literature and her special interest is the tussentaal, the linguistic variety of spoken language and its intelligibility for Central European students. She is also involved in the development of teaching materials, not only for advanced students.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, several PhD students participated in the teaching and development of the section, but they did not complete their doctoral studies. Some of them can be mentioned, however, as literary translators<sup>15</sup> of certified translators.<sup>16</sup> In 2009, the phonetician and linguist Marta Kostecká (Nováková) (\*1979) took over the leadership of the Dutch section. She graduated in Dutch and English philology from Palacký University in Olomouc and, like her predecessor, is pursuing the attractive part of Dutch studies, the teaching of literary translation. She herself works as an occasional literary translator and tries to continue the tradition of student translations founded by E. Máčelová-van den Broecke. These efforts resulted in two editions of the magazine *Plav*, publishing students' literary translations.<sup>17</sup>

In 2012, the members of the Dutch Section organised a translation workshop *Vertaalatelier* in cooperation with the *Expertisecentrum literair vertalen*. Two *Comenius Summer Schools of Dutch*

<sup>14</sup> In 2021, she completed a remarkable international project, the course *Nederlands voor gevorderde anderstaligen*, MOOC blended learning. (<https://taalunie.org/actueel/221/nederlands-voor-gevorderde-anderstaligen>), she also created a MOOC course *Gent in Gedichten* (<https://www.phil.muni.cz/nvt/mooc-gent-in-gedichten>) and many other outstanding materials and courses.

<sup>15</sup> Martina Limburg Loučková, Adéla Elbel. In 2017/2018, Veronika Horáčková (\*1992) joined the Dutch Section as a PhD student and literary translator focusing on the reception of Dutch authors in the Czech Republic. She is currently completing her PhD thesis entitled *Felix Timmermans in the Czech Literary System* with Wilken Engelbrecht as an external supervisor. The defense is planned for autumn 2021.

<sup>16</sup> Martina (Veliká) Donová.

<sup>17</sup> The issues in 7–8 (2007) and 3 (2009) – see references.



*Literature and Culture* were held in (2008, 2016), and then taken over by Olomouc in 2017. In addition to literary translations, Kostecká and Royeaerd work on developing the expertise, national and international cooperation and the creation of teaching materials.

Kostecká specialises in contrastive phonetics of Dutch and Czech and in teaching of correct pronunciation. In 2016, she defended her dissertation in General Linguistics, entitled *A Contrastive Description of the Standard Pronunciation of Dutch and Czech from the Perspective of Czech Learners of Dutch* (2019), supervised by Marie Krčmová, a Czech language expert and phonetician. One of the opponents of the thesis was Wilken Engelbrecht. In 2019, this work was published in an edited version as a monograph and part of the *Academic Grammar of Dutch in Czech*.

The Brno section of Dutch Studies is a two-member section. A third member, Professor Yves T'Sjoen (\*1966) of Ghent University, worked briefly at the section (2016–2019), teaching Afrikaans literature and Dutch-language poetry and supervising theses. He also participated with Wilken Engelbrecht as a consultant and lecturer at the *PhD Congress for Czech and Slovak PhD students* held in Brno in 2019.

Up until 2019/2020, Dutch Studies in Brno offered one- and two-subject Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes in *Dutch Language and Literature*. It was also possible to study a single-subject bachelor's degree in *DCC* until 2016. In the new accreditation system, the Dutch Studies section is switching to a system of combined major and minor studies in the Bachelor's degree from 2021 and is opening a major in *Dutch Language, Literature and Culture*. The Master of Arts in *Philology* will no longer be offered and instead it will be possible to study *Translation of Romance and Germanic Languages – Specialisation in Dutch* from 2019.

## Conclusion

The history of the two Moravian departments has been intertwined a number of times, whether it is the personality of Professor Wilken Engelbrecht or the cooperation within ONETS, Comenius or on other projects and congresses and publications.

The most recent project was for instance a student translation of the book *Samen op de "Laan van Europa" – 100 jaar Nederlands-Tsjecho-Slowaakse betrekkingen* (Together through the "Alley of Europe" 100 years of Dutch-Czech-Slovak Relations), which was created as an initiative of Wilken Engelbrecht by students from all Czech-Slovak Dutch Studies (Kostecká, 2019c: 123–124). We hope that Moravian Dutch Studies will continue on the right course and enjoy the interest of students. And if it should ever lie in ashes, let us call Engelbrecht to the rescue. After all, he is also an honourable member of the Volunteer Fire Corps of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, district Uherské Hradiště.

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# Literary Translations After the Velvet Revolution

**Abstract** | This article discusses literary translations from Dutch between 1990 and 2020, i.e. from the first post-revolutionary year to the last completed year. We are interested in what the literary market looked like after the Velvet Revolution, who translated and keeps translating, and what the criteria are for selecting Dutch works for translation. We also discuss the founder of the Czech translation school, Olga Krijtová, and her influence on Dutch literature in Czech translation.

**Key words** | literary translation, Dutch literature, Flemish literature, translatology, Olga Krijtová

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## Introduction

As the eminent Czech expert in Dutch literature Olga Krijtová (1931–2013) stated, literary scholars might sometimes wonder which books from their language area have been translated into other languages. The selection of translated books may not coincide with the literary canon of the country of origin (Krijtová 2004: 91). This phenomenon also applies to Czech translations of Dutch-written literature.

In this article we attempt to describe the reception of Dutch language literature in Czech translation over the years 1990–2020, in other words from the first year after the Velvet Revolution which took place in November 1989 and provided the possibility to translate and publish works that had been forbidden for a long time. This was also an opportunity for translators who were forbidden to work during the Communist period to publish once again and also under their own names.

By *Dutch-language literature* (or also Dutch-written literature) we mean books by Dutch and Flemish authors. It is not our aim to provide an exhaustive list of all translations of Dutch-written literature created in the territory of today's Czech Republic over the given period. Our intention has been to instead outline tendencies concerning Dutch and Flemish literature in Czech translation, and the general trends that could be observed in it.

Several publications have already been published which provide a comprehensive overview of the reception of Dutch-language literature in Czech translation. A chapter devoted to this issue can be found in the book *Dějiny nizozemské a vlámské literatury* [History of Dutch and Flemish Literature] edited by Wilken Engelbrecht (2015), in the publication *Bibliografie překladů z nizozemštiny do češtiny a slovenštiny od roku 1890 do roku 1993* [Bibliography of Translations from Dutch into Czech and Slovak from 1890 to 1993] by Olga Krijtová, Petra Schürová and Ruben Pellar (1994), in the published PhD dissertation by Lucie Smolka Fruhwirtová *Recepce nizozemské literatury v českém literárním kontextu let 1945–2010* (Reception of Dutch Literature in the Czech Literary Context of 1945–2010; 2011), the article *Nizozemská literatura nejen pro děti a mládež v českém překladu* [Dutch Literature not only for Children and Youth in the Czech Translation] by Eva Brázdová Toufarová (2017) and the article by Veronika ter Harmsel-Havlíková *Nederlandstalige literatuur in Tsjechië sinds 1990. Nederlandse en Vlaamse literatuur na de val van de muur* (Dutch-language Literature in the Czech Republic since 1990. Reception of Dutch and Flemish Literature after the Fall of the Iron Curtain; 2004). We rely on all of these publications to a certain extent.

## The Czech literary market after the Velvet Revolution

As has already been mentioned, this article will focus on translations published between 1990 and 2020. Some translations created after the Velvet Revolution amounted to a major milestone in Czech history, society and culture. The Velvet Revolution in November 1989 marked the end of the Communist regime and thus also the end of censorship. Titles could be published that the previous regime considered unacceptable, either because their authors were politically undesirable persons or because their subject matter was considered inadmissible by the Communist regime. After 1990, both quality works and books of questionable artistic value were published. The literary system was no longer subject to a totalitarian regime but to free market rules. In addition to censorship, it is also important to mention that not only authors but also translators were no longer banned from translating or increasing their academic qualifications, as was the case with Olga Krijtová, who had to publish her translations under the name of her former student Milena Perglerová (Krijtová 2011: 31 and Krol 2015: 168).

A number of new publishing houses were established, each of which usually published a wide range of books. While there were 550 publishing houses operating in the Czech Republic in 1990, it was already 5,474 by 2012. The number of published titles also grew. In 1990, a total of 4,136 works were published in the Czech Republic, while in 2010 it was 17,054 (Šimeček & Trávníček 2014: 386–402).

## General tendencies

Due to the fragmentation of the Czech literary market in the past thirty years, one cannot speak of a unified line of book translations from Dutch into Czech. The only exceptions were arguably two attempts to create a coherent series devoted to Dutch-language literature, which took place in the 1990s. These were the *Dutch Library* of the publisher Ivo Železný who published, for example, *Twee Vrouwen* [Two Women] by Harry Mulisch (1993) and the *Dutch Edition* of the publishing house Cinemax who published among other things *Het Belgisch Labyrint* [The Belgian Labyrinth] by Geert van Istendael (1998). Both series ceased, however, to exist soon after.

The range of Dutch-written literature translated into Czech between 1990–2020 is therefore relatively wide. It primarily includes quality fiction, which was mostly published with the help

of one of the literary funds (Engelbrecht et al. 2015: 526). Harry Mulisch (four books published in Czech after the Revolution), Arnon Grunberg (six books) and Cees Noteboom (three books) established themselves in this area. This category also included authors of quality fiction, who, however, did not become permanently established in the Czech environment. These were thus more or less ‘random’ translation. In this context, one might mention, for example, *Het Huis van de Moskee* [The House of the Mosque] by Kader Abdolah (2011), *Joe Speedboat* by Tommy Wieringa (2008) or *Donderdag namiddag, half vijf* [Thursday afternoon. Half past four] by Kristien Hemmerechts (2004).

Although Czech publishers tended to publish works by contemporary authors since the Revolution, as stated by the translator Veronika ter Harmsel-Havlíková (2004: 30), there are exceptions. While books written by Margriet de Moor and Hafid Bouazza were published in Czech only a few years after the Dutch original, Willem F. Hermans’ novel *De donkere kamer van Damokles* [The Darkroom of Damocles], in contrast, only received a Czech translation more than fifty years after the original was published.

As a rule, without institutional support, commercially tuned titles have been published in the past three decades. In recent years, Czech readers have been particularly interested in the (autobiographical) novels by Raymond van de Klundert known as Kluun. We can also mention the humorous books of Toon Kortooms, which were published mainly in the 1990s (which were reprints of older translations), as well as the author writing under the pseudonym Hendrik Groen.

Non-fiction has also gained more and more attention over the last thirty years. This category includes, among others, publications on prominent Dutch or Flemish personalities or local facts such as e.g. *Kleine geschiedenis van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: A Brief Life of the City, 1999) as well as popular science books like *Dierentalen* (Animal Languages, 2019). In this area, there is also a clear interest in so-called ego-documents, which often focus on the topic of World War II. Eddy de Wind’s book *Last Stop Auschwitz* (2020) is an example. *Dagboek van Anne Frank* [Anne Frank’s Diary] also belongs to this category, which was repeatedly published in various translations and editions before and after the Revolution.

Books for children and young people also have a stable place among Czech translations of Dutch and Flemish literature. Translations published between 1990 and 2020 include, among others, books written by Annie M.G. Schmidt *Wiplala* and *Minoes* (Minnie; both 1999), Francine Oomen’s novels for girls and reprints of older editions of the series about little Annejet by Miep Diekmann. Children’s books on homosexuality have also recently attracted attention, such as *Koning & Koning* [King & King] by Stern Nijland and Linda de Haan (2013). In addition, Dutch and Flemish comics are published in Czech, both for children and adults. The book *Sugar* by Serge Baeken (2016) can be, for example, mentioned in this area.

As for the source language, over the past three decades, there are several books which have not been translated directly from Dutch, but from English. Such practices are not particularly common in the twenty-first century since translations from a language other than the original source language have been considered undesirable in the Czech literary world since the middle of the nineteenth century. This occurs occasionally, especially for children’s books and comics (such as Leo Timmers’ books). In some cases, this procedure can be justified. Thomas Olde Heuvelt’s thriller *HEX* (2017) was translated into Czech from the English edition, which, in contrast to the Dutch edition, was considerably modified.

If we look at the ratio of translations, it is apparent that there are more Dutch authors that are being translated from Dutch than Flemish authors in the past thirty years, although in recent years the numbers have begun to equalize (Engelbrecht e. a. 2015: 525–526). In recent years, however, attention has also turned to Flemish authors such as Dimitri Verhulst, Griet

Op de Beeck and Peter Terrin. These are mostly authors who have won or been nominated for prestigious literary prizes.

## Criteria for selection of literature for translation

There are a number of criteria according to which Czech publishers decided in the years 1990–2020 whether to publish a certain book written in Dutch. The main criterion then and today was support from literary funds. In the case of the Netherlands, financial support is provided by the *Nederlands Letterenfonds* [Dutch Foundation for Literature]<sup>1</sup> and in the case of Belgium by *Literatuur Vlaanderen* [Flanders Literature].<sup>2</sup> The *Dutch Foundation for Literature* has been contributing to the publication of Dutch books in Czech since 1994. According to statistics, 251 Dutch titles were published in total in the past 30 years and 146 of them with the support of the Dutch Foundation for Literature in Czech. More precisely, it was 121 books translated from Netherlandic Dutch and 25 books from Belgian Dutch. There are 18 books in preparation with the support of *Dutch Foundation for Literature*. (Letterenfonds online) at present.

Another measure is the success of the book abroad, especially on the German market. Literary fairs in Frankfurt and Leipzig play an important role. If, for example, a book has a German translation that is successful, this a certain guarantee of possible success for the Czech publisher. The fact that it is translated from a 'small literature' such as Dutch is therefore often a random choice. The years 1993 and 2016, when the Netherlands and Flanders were guests of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair, were important impulses. The fact that the book won a literary award and, last but not least, its commercial potential also plays a role as was already mentioned above. A smaller number of titles are published thanks to the translators themselves.

## Notable translators

Over the past thirty years, a number of notable translators, dedicated to translations from Dutch, have emerged in the Czech Republic. The most significant is Veronika ter Harmsel-Havlíková (\*1972), who has translated a large number of titles of various genres over the past thirty years. Her translation portfolio includes Harry Mulisch, Arnon Grunberg and Dimitri Verhulst, among others. Ter Harmsel-Havlíková<sup>3</sup> has won two translation awards during her career thus far (see below).

The list of active literary translators also includes Magda de Bruin-Hüblová (\*1959), who has translated, for example, Margriet de Moor and Willem F. Hermans. Hüblová also works as the head of the Dutch section of the portal *iLiteratura.cz* (see below) and monitors the translations from Dutch to Czech and vice versa. Mention should also be made of Petra Schürová (\*1948), who focuses mainly on non-fiction, but also deals with translations of fiction (e.g. Hella S. Haasse). A number of books in the field of non-fiction are also translated by Ruben Pellar (\*1949), in whose portfolio one can also find fiction, including Leon de Winter. There are also a number of translations by Jitka Růžicková-Hronová (\*1961), such as books by Ton Kortooms or Peter Terrin. Recently, Radka Smejkalová (\*1973), among others the author of the translation of Tom Lanoye's *Het derde huwelijk* (The Third Marriage; 2020), has begun to make a name for

<sup>1</sup> Before 2010: Nederlands Literair Productie- en Vertalingenfonds (Dutch Fund of Literary Production and Translation).

<sup>2</sup> Before 2019: Vlaams Fonds voor de Letteren (Flemish Fund for Literature).

<sup>3</sup> Apart from being an outstanding literary translator, Ter Harmsel-Havlíková has defended her PhD dissertation in literary theory at Palacký University in Olomouc. See the article *Dutch Studies in Moravia* in this issue.



herself. The ‘grande dame’ of Dutch studies in the Czech Republic Olga Krijtová is also partly included in the work over the last three decades.

Among the translators who have been active for the past thirty years, but who are not (primarily) engaged in literary translation, is Jana Pellarová (\*1972), who has, for example, translated books by Annelies Verbeke and Geert van Istendael and a number of other books from Dutch. One should also mention Adéla Elbel (\*1981), who, in addition to a number of children’s books, translated, among other things, several novels by Griet op de Beeck. Among the occasional translators one should include Pavla van Dam Marková (1970), who among others provided the Czech translation of the novel *Sonny Boy* by Annejet van der Zijl, and Martina Limburg Loučková (\*1977), the author of the translation of *Ik kom terug* (I Will Return) by Adriaan van Dis.

Most of the translators mentioned here, such as Veronika ter Harmsel-Havlíková, Jitka Růžicková-Hronová, Petra Schürová, Ruben Pellar, are graduates of Dutch philology and, above all, students of the “translation school” of associate professor Olga Krijtová.

## Olga Krijtová (1931–2013)

Olga Krijtová, née Fuchsová worked at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University between 1955 and 2000.<sup>4</sup> Krijtová became an associate professor there in 1990, after the Velvet Revolution, when she was finally allowed to habilitate.

In this article, however, we want to focus on her work in the field of literary translation. Krijtová came across translations from Dutch very early. As a young girl, she read biographies of Dutch and Flemish painters that had been translated into English, and she wanted to study the fine arts. She also read *Max Havelaar* in Rudolf Vonka’s translation. She was sixteen at the time and felt that she had finally read Literature with a capital L.

In the end, Krijtová failed the entrance exam to the Academy of Arts and fate led her to study Dutch and English. One day she was able to open *Max Havelaar*, written by the Dutch author Multatuli (Eduard Douwes Dekker), in the original. And she could not help wondering. In her memoirs *Geschrift eener bejaarde vrouw uit 1997* [The Writing of an Aged Woman from 1997] (2011: 13), she reflected with hindsight on what the purpose of translation actually is. Was Vonka’s translation, or indeed “an artistic variation on a given theme” (Krol 2015: 163), a translation crime? What is actually the essence of translation? How far may the translator go and what are the limits of adequacy? Yes, the translator has certain obligations towards the author. To what extent should the translator be bound by the source language, so that it is impossible to reconstruct the original verbatim from every translated page. And to what extent does the translator function as a creator faithful to the author. Olga Krijtová has answered many of these basic and fundamental translation dilemmas during translation seminars and, as is evident from the recollections of her students, even after they became (not only) literary translators themselves she continued to them advice in the many letters she wrote to them. (Ne-Be 2014: 60–66)

Krijtová has been mediating Dutch literature to Czech readers since 1958, when her first translation of W. van Maanen’s *De onruststoker* [The Troublemaker] was published in *Světová literatura* 3 [World Literature 3]. The text was sent to her as a gift by the writer Theun de Vries, along with several other books. (Krijtová 2011: 43 and 76). How did Olga Krijtová, however, choose her books for translation? “There was a period in my interaction with Dutch literature when I was very concerned with the phenomenon of readability, with how books could engage the reader...” (Krijtová 2011: 31, translation MK). For Krijtová, the reader and their pleasure in

<sup>4</sup> Her academic career and achievements are discussed in the article by Kateřina Křížová and Pavlína Knap Dlouhá.

reading was more important than the aesthetic value of the text. (Krol 2015:165). Like many other countries in which Dutch works in translation have been published, the Czech audience could enjoy translations of books by writers such as Johan Fabricius, Anton Coolen, Louis Couperus, Arthur Japin, as well as books of so-called high brow literature by Harry Mulisch, Jan Wolkers, and Hugo Claus (Krijtová 2011: 33, 71–78, Krol 2015: 165).

Among Olga Krijtová's 'literary loves', as she says, were all the authors she translated and whose texts she made a thorough acquaintance with as a translator, including Louis Couperus, Willem Elsschot, Arthur Van Schendel and Herman Teirlinck (Krijtová 2011: 44–45). As we find in the bibliographies of her translations,<sup>5</sup> she created over seventy literary translations. In addition, Krijtová published many translator's notes, epilogues and introductions accompanying her translations, introducing Dutch literature to the Czech reader. She also published many studies on Dutch literature, entries on Dutch and Frisian literature in the *Slovník severních spisovatelů* (Dictionary of Northern Writers; 2004), as well as a monograph, *Průvodce dějinami nizozemské literatury* (A Guide through the History of Dutch Literature; 1990), a textbook on Dutch literature which was study material for several generations of students of Dutch. Students were able to gain an acquaintance with texts of Dutch literature in her *Čítanka nizozemských textů* (Reader of Dutch Texts; 1964).<sup>6</sup>

Czech literary translators are also well supported by Czech-language publications *Pozvání k překladatelské praxi* (Invitation to Translation Practice; 1996 and 2013), where Krijtová explains how to translate Dutch literature and literature in general using Dutch examples. The book is also based on translation seminars and ongoing translation discussions and answers to many of the questions mentioned above and many more. The second edition (2013) was co-authored by her student and the excellent translator Veronika ter Harmsel-Havlíková.

Olga Krijtová has received many awards for her translation work and her contributions to translatology and Dutch studies. She received the Dutch *Martinus Nijhoff Prijs* (1969), became an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Dutch Language and Literature in Ghent (1986–2007) and was awarded the *Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau* medal (2001). In 2007, she was awarded the *NLPVF-vertalersprijs* by the Dutch and Flemish Literary Foundation (Kluková et al. 2017: 32, Krol 2015: 170).

In the Czech context, she was awarded the *Josef Jungmann Prize* in 2005 and the *Magnesia Litera* in 2006 for her translation of Hugo Claus's *The Rumours* (2006).

Olga Krijtová was not only an excellent literary translator, an outstanding expert on Dutch literature, a kind teacher, but also an interesting author. Her *Geschrift eener bejaarde vrouw uit 1997*, a collection of reflections on Krijtová's life and work, is a testament to this and deserves a Czech translation so as to enable a wider audience to appreciate her translated books. Although Krijtová aspired to study at an art academy, she left behind an equally colourful array of translations from Dutch literature. This is an image that has inspired many generations of Dutch scholars past and future.

## Promotion of Dutch literature in the Czech Republic

In the Czech literary environment, there are a number of platforms where Dutch-language literature is promoted. On *iLiteratura.cz*, the Czech website dedicated to world literature, we can find a Dutch/Flemish section, which regularly publishes profiles of authors, reviews and excerpts

<sup>5</sup> A survey can be found in *Geschrift eener bejaarde vrouw uit 1997* (2011: 20–23).

<sup>6</sup> Other academic texts, including the *Reader of Dutch Texts*, are discussed in the article by Křížová and Knap Dlouhá in this issue.

from works. In addition, an overview of Dutch and Flemish works published in Czech over the past year is published here every year. Dutch and Flemish literature also appears in *Plav* magazine, which focuses on translations from world literature. In the past, several editions have been published focusing directly on Dutch-language literature, namely modern Dutch and Flemish literature (2007), contemporary Belgian literature (2009), Belgian drama (2016) and books dealing with the colonial past of the Netherlands and Belgium (2017). Translations of Dutch works are also published in the yearbook of the Czech Society for Dutch and Flemish Culture NE-BE.

In addition, Dutch-language literature is regularly presented at book festivals. The most important is the international book festival *Svět knihy* [Book World], which takes place every year in Prague. The turning point was 1999, when Dutch written literature was promoted here with the participation of Arnon Grunberg, Cees Nooteboom and Margriet de Moor (Engelbrecht et al. 2015: 524). Another event is the annual *Noc literatury* [Literature Night] in which famous personalities in non-traditional places in the Czech Republic and abroad read works by contemporary European authors. In recent years, for example, books by Jeroen Olyslaegers, Kader Abdolah and Arthur Japin have been read. Since 1990, the *Festival spisovatelů Praha* [Prague Writers' Festival] has also been held every year, consisting of readings by contemporary authors. Arnon Grunberg is a regular guest of the festival.

In the case of Dutch literature, one should also mention that the Dutch Foundation for Literature (and Literature Flanders) take great care in promoting Dutch-written literature and are known for distributing the magazine *Ten Books from Holland and Flanders* to Czech publishers, presenting a selection of interesting titles that have already been translated into various languages.

## Awards

With regard to literary awards in the Czech Republic, mention should be made of the independent Magnesia Litera prize awarded since 2002. In 2006, Olga Krijtová received an award in the translation category for her translation of Hugo Claus' novel *De geruchten* [The Rumours]. One year later, she received the NLPVF Literary Fund Award for the promotion of Dutch literature in the Czech Republic.

Jednota českých překladatelů [Czech Literary Translators' Guild] has been awarding the Josef Jungmann Prize since 1991. Veronika ter Harmsel-Havlíková was awarded twice. In 2001, she received the Tomáš Hrách Award, which is given to translators under the age of 34, for translating Harry Mulisch' novel *De Procedure* [The Procedure]. Ten years later, she received an extraordinary creative award at the same venue, this time for her translation of Mulisch' *De ontdekking van de hemel* [The Discovery of Heaven]. Beginning Czech translators may compete in the Jiří Levý Competition, which is also organized by the Czech Literary Translators' Guild. Regarding Dutch literature, the following translators received awards: Magda de Bruin-Hübllová (in 1994), Veronika ter Harmsel-Havlíková (1995), Veronika Havlová and Lenka Křesťanová (2006), Jaroslav Paták (2007), Romana Štrudlová (2007), Jana Poláková (2008), Veronika Horáčková (2015) and Lukáš Vítek (2017).

## Dutch written literature in Czech in the years 2016–2020

We will take a closer look at the last five years, i. e. the period from 2016 to 2020 at the end of this article. Over this time period, a total of 79 Dutch and Flemish titles were published in Czech. It was 18 books in 2016, 19 in 2017, 15 in 2018, 11 in 2019 and 16 in 2020. It can be stated that the number of published books remains more or less balanced over these years, with the exception of

only a slight decrease in 2019. Compared to the previous five-year period, however, the number of published titles increased significantly in this last five-year period.

If we take a closer look at the statistics of published books, we will find that only a small part of the published books falls into the category of quality fiction. Out of the total number of 79 titles, only 23 works can be marked in this way (i. e. 29% of the total number). Examples include Dimitri Verhulst's *De laatkomer* (The Latecomer; 2017) and *En de akker is de wereld* [And the Field is the World] by Dola de Jong (2016). A small part of the total number is occupied by lighter genres, i. e. thrillers, detective stories and humorous novels (5 out of 79 titles, which is 6%). A series of humorous books by Hendrik Groen was especially popular.

A significant number of the titles consists of children's books (24 out of 79, i. e. 30%), whereby an interest in a book series can be observed (for example, Karina Schaapman's *Het Muizenhuis* [The Mouse Mansion]. This also includes popular educational books for children, including pictorial publications by Peter Goes.

A large part is the non-fiction genre (18 out of 79 works, i. e. 23%), which includes a wide range of titles. These contain so-called ego-documents, such as *Zolang er nog tranen zijn* [As long as There Are Still Tears] by Hannelore Grünberg-Klein (2018), popular science titles for adults, including *Onder het mes!* [Under the Knife!] by Arnold van de Laar dealing with the history of surgery (2020), or publications on prominent personalities of the Netherlands and Belgium such as *Joris Ivens, wereldcineast* [Joris Ivens, the World Film-maker] by André Stufkens (2016).

As concerns the publishing houses that published a larger amount of Dutch or Flemish literature in the last five years, one can name the publishing houses Argo, Host, Mladá fronta and the publishing group Albatros Media. Several (examples from) literary works were also published in magazines, or online on the iLiteratura.cz website. As for issues directly devoted to Dutch language literature, one can name issue 2016/6 of the literary magazine *Plav* focused on Belgian drama. There are three translations of Flemish drama texts written by Hugo Claus, Tom Lanoye and Pieter de Buysser in this issue. Issue 2017/12 was devoted to Flemish and Dutch colonial literature. Samples of works by Bea Vianen, Ellen Ombre, Cola Debrot, Frank Martinus Arion, Marion Bloem, Sylvia Pessirenon, Jef Geeraerts and Lieve Joris were published there.

The international project CELA (2019–2023), which aims to support the circulation of works written by young European authors with the help of beginning translators, could provide new impetus for the future. As part of it, the beginning translators Blanka Juranová (\*1990) and Veronika Horáčková (\*1992) have translated the works of three Dutch and three Flemish authors (Alma Mathijssen, Lisa Weeda, Nikki Dekker, Aya Sabi, Hannah Roels, Vincent van Meenen).

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# ONETS, a Platform for Czech and Slovak Dutch Studies as an Example of Cooperation

**Abstract** | In this year of the hundredth anniversary of Dutch Studies in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, cooperation is more important than ever. Declining numbers of students make the small departments even more vulnerable. The platform for Dutch Studies in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, ONETS, is therefore active on different levels of cooperation, e.g. curriculum, guest lectures, projects and research and cultural activities. Several examples will demonstrate how this cooperation is being implemented within the organizational structure of ONETS.

**Keywords** | ONETS – Cooperation – Dutch Studies – Czech Republic – Slovakia – Central Europe

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## Introduction

The celebration this year of the hundredth anniversary of Dutch Studies in the Czech Republic and Slovakia is a good occasion to provide a closer look at the cooperation within the field of Dutch Studies in this region. The field of Dutch Studies is relatively small internationally. This is also the case in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and over the last decade – probably due to demographic reasons – the region saw a decline in the numbers of students. This makes this field of study vulnerable. For small departments, cooperation is thus essential to strengthen their position, not only within their home institutions, but also in the region. This cooperation can take place on different levels, e.g. on the level of the curriculum and didactics, research and projects, guest lecturers, student mobility and cultural events. For the coordination of such cooperation, an efficient organizational structure is needed, in which all the departments are represented. This article will discuss how the cooperation between the departments of Dutch Studies in the Czech Republic and Slovakia is organized. The participation of the Czech and Slovak departments within broader, Central-European, structures will also be briefly mentioned where necessary.

After the introduction of different levels of cooperation and their objectives in general, the ONETS-platform, the organizational structure of Czech-Slovak cooperation, will be introduced. The way shared activities are implemented within the organizational structure will be demonstrated on the basis of concrete activities organized in the recent past.



## Objectives of Cooperation in Dutch Studies

During the congress on the occasion of the opening of the Centre for Language and Culture of the Low Countries in 2003 at the Department of Dutch Studies of Palacký University in Olomouc, Herbert van Uffelen<sup>1</sup> stated: "I am convinced that Dutch Studies in Middle or Central Europe can, over the long run, keep playing a role only when the cooperation between the institutes and departments in the region, as realized in the past, can be continued"<sup>2</sup> (Van Uffelen 2003: 44). The most common levels of cooperation, based on experience and collaboration within broader cooperation in the Central European region, will be discussed shortly before applying it to the Czech-Slovak context.

### a) Curriculum

The basis of the curricula of Dutch Studies is language acquisition. This is the foundation for understanding literature, culture, linguistics, etc. The choice of a teaching method for language acquisition and updating the method is therefore an essential, but difficult choice. A partner department can be of great help by sharing good practices and potential problems. For literature, ideas about reading lists for students can be shared, as well as digitalized libraries and course material. The same goes for linguistics and culture related courses.

### b) Guest Lecturers

Inviting guest lecturers separately is less efficient than inviting them for a tour of the departments in a country or a region. This saves not only travelling costs and time spent on the organization of the lectures, it also provides the guest lecturer with a broader impression of the field of study in the country or region. In addition, the students of the different departments are provided with a shared series of lectures. On the basis of these shared lectures, further cooperation can be implemented, e.g. in the form of common projects or cultural activities.

### c) Research and Projects

Most departments have certain expertise within the field of study. In addition, master's students and Ph.D. students focus on a certain area of study, e.g. literature, culture, translation or interpreting. By linking this knowledge and interests, this can create incentive for the implementation of multi-disciplinary projects and research. The cooperation, in projects and research between teachers and students of different departments, can further strengthen the cooperation between departments in general. Applying for project and research funding by multiple partners is also encouraged by the organizations supplying funding.

### d) Student and Teacher Mobility

Students can not only apply for student mobility to a country where Dutch is the mother tongue, but they can also spend a semester at a partner department in the region. Although not in a Dutch language environment, it may be motivating for students to meet other students studying Dutch in another country in the region. The student can choose, for example, a partner where the field of study the student is interested in is being offered as a specialization with the accompanying available study materials and libraries. This can be useful for the accumulation of research material for their thesis. For teachers, teacher mobility to a partner in the region can provide the opportunity to consult with colleagues and learn from different teaching methods and organizational structures. The drawing up of a mobility agreement, e.g. within Erasmus and Ceepus, will thus only strengthen the cooperation.

<sup>1</sup> Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Herbert Van Uffelen – Department of European and Comparative Literature and Language Studies, University of Vienna – initiated among others the project *DCC* (Dutch Language, Literature and Culture in a Central European Context) and the Ceepus network *Language and Literature in a Central European Context*.

<sup>2</sup> All translations by the author of this paper.

e) Cultural Events, Summer Schools and Promotion of Dutch Language and Culture

The organization of shared cultural events is an excellent way to bring students from different departments together. Such events may include, for example, visiting writers, theatre, exhibitions or a combination of those mentioned. In addition, if open to the public and not only for students, cultural activities are a good option to promote Dutch language and culture in the region. Not only is the organization of shared events more cost and organizational efficient, it is a pleasant way for students to get in contact with fellow students from the region. The same applies to the organization of summer schools for students from the region. Not only do they spend time with fellow students during intensive language courses, but they make contact with native speakers from the Low Countries.

## Czech-Slovak Cooperation – ONETS Platform

In 1994, just after Czechoslovakia split into two separate nations, there were departments of Dutch Studies in Bratislava (Comenius University), Brno (Masaryk University), Olomouc (Palacký University) and Prague (Charles University). This is the year of the founding of the *Association for Dutch Studies in the Czech Republic and Slovakia* – ONETS,<sup>3</sup> initiated by the department in Brno “to extend and strengthen the good relations with colleagues in Bratislava, Olomouc and Prague” (Declodt 1999: 65). This cooperation was initiated because “Brno is convinced that the already mentioned objectives (good language education, the development of solid teaching materials, the diffusion of Dutch language and culture to a larger audience) can only then be optimally realized when there will be cooperation with other departments and sections” (1999: 65). From the beginning, the Taalunie<sup>4</sup> provided ONETS with financial support.

### *Organizational Structure and Financial Support*

ONETS is still very active as of 2021. The departments of Bratislava, Brno, Olomouc and Prague meet twice a year, usually in September and February, just before the start of the new semester. The partners take turn hosting the meetings. The board consists at present of the chairman (Bas Hamers – Olomouc), the treasurer (Wilken Engelbrecht – Olomouc) and the secretary (Benjamin Bossaert – Bratislava). During the meetings, other members of the different departments can attend. Reoccurring points of discussion are the current situation (amount of students, accreditation, etc), planning of guest lectures, ongoing and future projects, cultural events and the financial situation. Lunch is a good occasion to catch up and discuss matters in an informal atmosphere.

ONETS is financially supported by the Taalunie. This support consists of two components – support for the organization of the meetings and support for the organization of the guest lectures (travel expenses, accommodation). Some of the cultural activities organized within ONETS are partly supported by the General Representation of the Government of Flanders.

### *Cooperation within ONETS*

There are different levels, as discussed above, on which the partners cooperate within ONETS. The examples of the many given hereafter will provide an impression of this cooperation.

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<sup>3</sup> Overleg Nederlands in Tsjechië en Slowakije

<sup>4</sup> Dutch Language Union – The Taalunie develops and promotes policy on Dutch in the Netherlands, Flanders and Suriname and champions the Dutch language around the world.

#### a) Curriculum and Accreditation

Curricula and teaching methods are not static, especially at new accreditation rounds, where there is an opportunity to make small amendments in the curriculum and introduce new teaching methods. In 2019, Sofie Royeaerd (Brno) initiated the development of the MOOC course *Nederlands voor gevorderde anderstaligen*,<sup>5</sup> in cooperation with an international team of co-developers. Thanks to the close contacts within ONETS, the pilot course ran for one semester (12 lessons) in Bratislava and Olomouc, in their role of evaluators. In Olomouc, the pilot ran in the regular course *Conversation* for master's students. After positive feedback from both the students and the teacher, it was decided to integrate this course into the curriculum.

The accreditation of a study program is a complicated and time-consuming process. For the Czech Republic, the departments of Dutch Studies in Brno, Olomouc and Prague can advise one other about how to process the accreditation, how to handle potential problems and 'do and don'ts'. This can save time and complications and thus increases the chances of successful accreditation.

#### b) Guest Lecturers

An important part of the cooperation within ONETS are the guest lecturers, preferably native-speakers from the Low Countries. One guest lecturer is scheduled each semester. The lecturer makes a tour of the four departments, giving two lectures at every partner department. These tours usually take two weeks. During the ONETS meetings, every partner can propose one or several lecturers for the next academic year. One candidate for the coming semester will be decided based on this list of candidates. Variations in the field of study (literature, linguistics, culture) will be taken into account, if possible a different field of study every semester.

A tour of all four departments has various advantages. First, it is cost efficient. The travel expenses for a lecturer from the Low Countries have to be paid only once, while the travel expenses within the Czech-Slovak region are relatively low. In addition, the guest lecturer receives a broader impression of the situation in Dutch Studies in the Czech – Slovak region and will meet more colleagues, which can be an inspiration for future contacts and cooperation. Deciding together on guest lecturers also has the advantage of being able to make use of all the connections and contacts of all colleagues in the Low Countries and the Central European region. It also guarantees a steady flow of one lecturer per semester.

An example of the visit of a guest lecturer organized within ONETS will illustrate how such a tour is organized. Prof. dr. Heidi Salaets (KU Leuven)<sup>6</sup> was proposed by one of the ONETS members as a guest lecturer in the study field of translatology. This was not only of interest for the Olomouc and Bratislava partners, where translatology is a field of expertise, but also for Brno and Prague as an introduction for their students in this field of study. The next step was contacting Prof. Salaets. After her acceptance of the invitation, the subject of the two lectures was decided on, this being *communication and interpreting* and *juridical and medical interpreting*. The itinerary was consequently determined for the month of October 2019:

<sup>5</sup> *Dutch for Advanced Non-native Speakers*. This project was financially supported by the Taalunie and the course was conceived as MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses), open to the public.

<sup>6</sup> Prof. dr. Heidi Salaets is the head of the Interpreting Studies Research Group at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Leuven.

*Arrival from Brussels in Prague by plane on 16 October 2019 – lectures in Prague (17–18 October) – lectures in Olomouc (21–22 October) – lectures in Brno (22–23 October) – lectures in Bratislava (24–25 October) – flight back to Vienna – Brussels*

The travel expenses, the plane from and to Brussels and the train between the partners, were paid from the financial support from the Taalunie, as well as the accommodation.

This was an opportunity for students to make contact with an authority in translatology. This can be an extra motivation to engage in further research in this field of study. Such motivation can result, for example, in participation in future projects organized by the partners. For the teachers engaged in translatology, this can be an opportunity to discuss their own research with the guest lecturer.

### c) Projects and Workshops

Literature is part of all the curricula in the region. Literary translation is, however, a very specific skill, which is not an important point of interest within the region. A creative and interactive way to engage students, and their teachers, in literature and translation, is to organize a translation workshop focused on one book with its author being present.

These workshops were organized as part of ONETS in 2011 and 2012 with students participating from Brno, Bratislava, Olomouc and Prague. With support from *Vlaams Fonds voor de Letteren*<sup>7</sup> and *Expertisecentrum voor Literair Vertalen*,<sup>8</sup> the workshop in Bratislava was organized to “put literary translating more in the spotlight and make it more structured” (Bossaert 2015: 49). The workshop had a theoretical and practical component. The students were introduced to translation theories on the first day, mainly within the Czech-Slovak tradition of literary translation. On the second and third days, the students had the opportunity to discuss translation related matters with the guest writer Diane Broeckhoven.<sup>9</sup> As preparation, the students had translated, during the semester, parts of her novel *Vergrijzing*. During the workshops, translation related matters were discussed, e. g. the writer’s own attitude towards her work being translated, typical translation problems and trying to find translation solutions for the more problematic parts of the book. The workshops were coordinated by Veronika ter Harmsel-Havlíková (Charles University Prague) and Adam Bžoch (Catholic University Ružomberok). Using the same concept, the workshop was organized in Brno in 2012, the visiting writer being Joke van Leeuwen.<sup>10</sup> During these workshops, the students not only had the opportunity to work with translations in a creative way and in the presence of the author, but it also was a good opportunity to meet students from the other partners.

The European project *PACI* (Professional Accessible Community Interpreting) involved cooperation between Comenius University Bratislava (coordinating partner), Palacký University Olomouc, University of Wrocław and Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) over the period 2017 – 2021. Although not organized within ONETS, the project was inspired by the close contacts between Marketa Štefková (Bratislava) and Pavlína Knap-Dlouhá (Olomouc), both engaged in translatology at their respective universities. In addition, Rita Temmerman,<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> In 2019, the name was changed to *Literatuur Vlaanderen*. Literatuur Vlaanderen “supports literature in Flanders with subsidies for writers, translators, publishers and organizers”.

<sup>8</sup> *Expertisecentrum voor Literair Vertalen* promotes the expertise of literary translators from and into Dutch to guarantee the quality of translations.

<sup>9</sup> Diane Broeckhoven (\*1946) is a Flemish writer of both novels for young adults and adults.

<sup>10</sup> Joke van Leeuwen (\*1952) is a writer of novels, poetry and children’s books.

<sup>11</sup> Prof. dr. Rita Temmerman is professor in translation, multilingual intercultural communication and terminology studies at the Department of Applied Linguistics of Vrije Universiteit Brussels.

one of the VUB team members of, visited the ONETS partners as a guest lecturer in 2016 and thus had the opportunity to discuss the plans for the project in person. The main objective of the PACI project was “the professionalization of community interpreting/translating in Central Europe”. (Knap-Dlouhá & Křížová 2020: 86).

#### d) Student and Teacher Mobility

In the ONETS region, student and teacher mobility is possible from the three Czech partners to Bratislava, and vice versa, within the Ceepus network.<sup>12</sup> Olomouc and Brno also have an Erasmus agreement with Bratislava, initiated by the DCC project.<sup>13</sup> Although students are encouraged to spend a semester in the Netherlands or Belgium, a semester spent at an ONETS partner can be useful for research or to take advantage of certain courses not offered at the home university. A student interested in translatology can, for example, spend a semester in Bratislava or Olomouc, or a student from Bratislava interested in linguistics can choose Prague. Teacher mobility, in contrast, can take place for consultations or guest lectures.

#### e) Cultural Events and Visiting Writers

Cultural events and visits by writers from the Low Countries are a good opportunity for the students from the Czech-Slovak region to meet one other, learn more about the cultural element of the Low Countries and see a writer in person.

The theatre performance *Lachland* by the Belgium theatre company *Theater van A tot Z*<sup>14</sup> was staged in Olomouc in March 2018. *Lachland* has been developed for non-native Dutch speakers with a focus on interculturality and language, all performed in a humorous way. Prior to the performance, the students attended two, informal lectures about sense of humour in the Netherlands (Bas Hamers, Olomouc) and in Belgium (Benjamin Bossaert, Bratislava). There was an opportunity to meet the guests in the informal setting of a pub in the evening. There were about 70 students present at the lectures and performance, 40 from Olomouc and 30 from the partners. Several teachers from all the partners also attended the performance. The organization of this event was financially supported by the General Representation of the Government of Flanders.

The organization of this event is a good example of the importance of the connections within ONETS. In July 2017, Olomouc hosted the Comenius<sup>15</sup> summer school of Dutch for Central European students. During the preparation, Benjamin Bossaert (Bratislava) suggested as special guest Peter Schoenaerts, member of *Theater van A tot Z* and co-author of method Dutch for non-native speakers *Vanzelfsprekend*. One of the teachers during the summer school was Els Vertongen, also a member of *Theater van A tot Z*. During the summer school, the idea was born to organize the performance of *Lachland*.

Most of the writers from the Low Countries who visit the Czech-Slovak region do so on the occasion of the translation into Czech or Slovak of one of their books. Usually they visit the home university of the translator and the home town of the publisher (mostly Prague). Within ONETS, however, there was an opportunity for students of all the partners to attend

<sup>12</sup> Central European Exchange Program for University Studies, for more information, see <https://www.ceepus.info/default.aspx>

<sup>13</sup> Dutch Language, Literature and Culture in a Central European Context – participating universities: Vienna, Brno, Olomouc, ELTE Budapest, Debrecen, Wrocław, Bratislava), for more information, see <https://dcc.univie.ac.at/>

<sup>14</sup> *Theater van A tot Z* create, among other things, theater productions for non-native speakers of Dutch, for more information, see <https://theateraz.be/over.html>

<sup>15</sup> Comenius is the association for Netherlandistics in the Central European region, for more information, see <https://comeniusned.eu/#overons>.

the meeting with the writer. An example of such an event was the meeting with the Belgian writer Lize Spit,<sup>16</sup> whose novel *Het smelt* was translated into Czech by a former student of Dutch in Brno, Adéla Elbelová, who also moderated the meeting in cooperation with the head of the Dutch department in Brno, Marta Kostecká.

## Conclusion

In an ever changing academic environment, cooperation between the departments of Dutch Studies is essential to survive. ONETS is an example within the Czech-Slovak region. The result of this cooperation are a structural offering of guest lectures and cultural activities. The cooperation also inspired several projects and research. As mentioned above, there are broader organizational structures of cooperation within the Central European region (Ceepus, DCC, Comenius) in which the Czech-Slovak departments also play an active role. This can be an option in the future to engage students within the Czech-Slovak region in ONETS. Not long after the creation of ONETS, the initiative for such cooperation was already taken: “A very special form of cooperation [...] is the initiative by a group of students of Charles University, Palacký University and Masaryk University [...] to create a student association for Dutch Studies” (Engelbrecht 2000: 79). The circumstances, in this digital age, seem even more favourable to revive this initiative and make the most of the initiatives and creativity of the students.

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<sup>16</sup> Lize Spit (\*1988) made her debut in 2016 with the novel *Het smelt*.



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## Style Sheet Rules

Submitted texts should be written in one of common text editors (doc, docx, rtf, odt), in the Times New Roman 12 font, line spacing 1.5; pictures and figures should be submitted separately in formats as jpg, tif, eps, and gif.

*CSJH* follows the Chicago Style Manual.

## Publication Ethics

### Guidelines for Editors

#### General Responsibilities

- Editors are accountable for all content published in their journal. Editors must be ready to publish corrections and apologies when necessary.
- Editors must follow transparent editorial policy. Submission guidelines and requirements for potential contributors to the journal must be published.

**Conflict of Interest**

- Editors require authors, reviewers and editorial board members to disclose potential conflicts of interest.
- Editors make decisions to accept or reject submissions based on the quality of the submission and its suitability for the journal. Editors must make sure that commercial considerations do not interfere with their editorial decisions.
- Editors must make sure that non-peer-reviewed sections of the journal are clearly marked as such.

**Peer-Review Practice**

- Editors must ensure that all research submissions are peer-reviewed. A description of the peer review practice must be published for the benefit of potential contributors to the journal.
- Editors are accountable for recruiting qualified reviewers. Editors must strive to obtain highly competent reviewers and discontinue using reviewers who consistently deliver poor quality reviews.
- Editors must ensure that reviews are relevant, courteous and timely. Reviewers should judge the quality of the research and not comment on the researcher's gender, race, beliefs and the like.

**Academic Integrity**

- Editors and reviewers must treat all submissions under review as confidential. Editors must protect the identity of reviewers and the identity of authors if a double-blind review process is used.
- Editors must ensure that all submissions comply with ethical research standards, particularly in research involving human or animal subjects.
- Editors must make sure that all submissions comply with academic integrity standards, particularly with respect to plagiarism, data falsification, image manipulation and the like. Suspicions of scientific misconduct must be promptly investigated and response from authors suspected of misconduct must be sought.

**Guidelines for Authors****General Responsibilities**

- Authors are accountable for all aspects of their research submitted for publication to a journal. Authors of a multi-author submission have joint responsibility for their research, unless stated otherwise.
- Authors must promptly notify editors if they discover any errors in their research. This applies to research that has been submitted, is under review or has been published. Authors must cooperate with editors to rectify any errors.
- Authors must comply with submission guidelines and requirements published by the editors.
- Authors are aware that failure to meet these requirements may result in rejection of their research for publication.

**Conflict of Interest**

- Authors must disclose potential conflicts of interest.
- Authors must publish all sources of their research funding, including both financial and nonfinancial support.
- Authors must disclose their relationship to the journal, particularly when editors and reviewers seek publication in a journal that they are affiliated with.

**Peer-Review Process**

- Authors must cooperate with editors at all stages of the publication process. Authors must notify editors if they choose to withdraw their submission at any stage of the peer-review and publication process.
- Authors must respond to comments of reviewers in a relevant and timely manner. Authors must carefully check proofs supplied by editors before authorising them.

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- Authors must comply with academic integrity standards, particularly with respect to plagiarism, data falsification, image manipulation and the like. Authors must appropriately quote and cite all sources used in their research and refrain from including indirect quotations from sources that they have not consulted.
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