

Panel 35 at the European Conference on South Asian Studies, 27-30 July 2016

Linguistic Terrains in South Asia: Translation and the Enlargement of Language Cultures

This panel re-examines the historic relationships between languages in South Asia through the lens of translation. What is translation's role and significance in a multi-lingual cultural context? What translation practices can we identify across literary/non-literary cultures? To what extent can these practices be classified as 'translation' as we currently understand the English term?

We propose to investigate conceptualizations and practices of translation to increase our understanding of how South Asian language cultures have interacted and crystalized in different constellations over the centuries. Papers are invited examining the role of translation in the shifting linguistic terrains of South Asia before the twentieth century to give this topic historical depth and perspective. Proposals are invited on any of the following sub-themes and with relation to any Indian language pairs (Marathi or Tamil particularly welcome):

- Role of translation in maintaining or challenging linguistic boundaries, language hierarchies and literary canons
- Translators: social status, political power, agency
- Scripts: absence/presence of scripts; translation's intersections with copying and scribal cultures
- Translation and patronage: patrons, institutions and their ideologies
- Role of translation in standardizing languages: interactions between 'high' and 'low' languages; formal, informal, non-standard language registers
- Religion in translation: movement of sacred texts and themes
- Translation and space: genre, text and performance
- Translation choice and censorship: silences, exclusions and resistance in literary histories