



Translation

Mediterranean Editors and Translators Hold First Meeting

by Alan Lounds

The First Mediterranean Editors' and Translators' Meeting (METM) was held in Barcelona, Spain on November 4-5. It marked the launching of Mediterranean Editors and Translators (www.metmeetings.org), an interdisciplinary association of people in the Mediterranean and southern Europe who facilitate international communication for those whose native language is not English—a group who are not suitably represented by national associations of translators or associations of scientific editors.

Over the two days of the meeting, what one speaker described as a “motley crew” of language facilitators working in a wide variety of scientific fields joined publishers and scientists to discuss issues related to scientific communication. The enthusiasm of the 80+ participants showed that the original idea had been well-grounded. There was a general consensus on the high quality of the programme offered, and the fact that much could be gained from future contacts. The meeting was held at the Institut Europeu de la Mediterranea, a Catalan and Spanish research foundation dedicated to European-Mediterranean cooperation. This will also be the venue for the 2006 meeting to be held on **10-11 November 2006**.

Presentations

Joy Burrough-Boenisch, a founding member of the Society of English-Native-Speaking Editors in the Netherlands (SENSE), described the Society and discussed ways that MET could profit from its experience. She also presented a workshop on “Unclogging Dutch English” that she developed for SENSE in 2005. (Her visit to Barcelona was sponsored by the Dutch Consulate.)

Ana Marusic, editor of the *Croatian Medical Journal (CMJ)*, described the experience of working for a small journal in a small country, in which editors must play an important role as educators, providing help with writing and organising courses and workshops to allow authors to communicate their research to the international scientific community. (Dr. Marusic's visit to Barcelona was sponsored by Prous Science.) Details of the process of manuscript editing and practical examples were presented by Aleksandra Misak, language editor of the *CMJ*.

The publishers' perspective was presented in a panel session on the skills needed to support print or web presentation. This panel involved representatives of Elsevier/Doyma, Prous Science, and International Micobiology.

Karen Shashok (translator and editorial consultant, Malaga, Spain) dealt with the issues involved when translators take on new roles as editors. Ann King and Jane Lewis (freelance translators, Barcelona) organised a hands-on session dealing with the pitfalls of style, grammar, and usage that may arise when one is editing texts by non-native speakers. The contrasting discourse styles of Spanish and English were discussed by Ian Williams (University of Cantabria, Santander, Spain), who presented an analysis of medical research articles in the two languages. Malcolm Hayes (International Communications and

Technical Services, Lleida, Spain) examined techniques for improving the quality of corrections through negotiation with the authors. Iain Patten (freelance translator, Valencia, Spain) described the problems of inconsistent citation of sources and ways in which language consultants may be able to help authors develop their referencing skills. Valeria Materese (UpTo.it, Italy) described how biomedical research communication can be improved through an introductory course on journal reading.

Susan DiGiacomo (freelance translator and author's editor, Barcelona, Spain) brought together a panel of scientists to discuss the implications of translation as critical reading and dialogic practice in situations in which the translator is also an expert in the field. The varied background of scientific editors and translators, and the transition from this background to working as language facilitators, were discussed in a panel session led by Catherine Mark (Department of Immunology & Oncology, CSIC, Madrid).

Mary Ellen Kerans (freelance author's editor and translator, Barcelona, Spain) described the challenge of full bilingual publication of scientific journals, an increasing trend that allows scientific societies to join the mainstream academic discourse without abandoning their local languages. Ben Young (Young Medical Communication, Madrid) presented an overview of the profession of medical writing and client needs in the regulatory environment. Anthony Pym (Rovira i Virgili University, Tarragona) described the present situation of localisation theory and practice, and how it is challenging the traditional models of translation. Alan Lounds (Technical University of Catalonia, Spain) led a panel discussion on the restrictions of scientific translation and editing in university language services in Spain.

An historical perspective to Mediterranean science communication was provided by Frances Luttikhuisen (editor and independent scholar, Barcelona, Spain), who described the role of the Nestorians in scholarly enquiry in pre-Islamic times, and Alain Touwaide (Smithsonian Institute, Washington DC, USA), who gave a talk on Arabic literature and science in Byzantium.

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