

**Language and knowledge in early modern Britain:**

**circulating words, expanding lexicons**

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**The role of church history in the history of English: a terminological corpus-based analysis**

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*Abstract*

In the wake of the Reformation, the earliest documents of Christianity were systematically studied and translated by intellectuals from all parts of the religious spectrum. English translations were highly experimental and lexically innovative, as demonstrated by their appearance amongst the first 1000 sources of the *OED*. In our paper we propose a corpus-based study of the linguistic competence of writers and translators who transferred the Greek and Latin knowledge of Christian Antiquity into English. This study points out a prevalence of church-related vocabulary as a specialised terminology, but it also focuses on other secondary domains such as demonyms and geographical terms.

The study is based on the concepts, frameworks and methods of corpus-based Terminology (Cabré 1998, Gamper and Stock 1998), Specialised Discourse (Gotti 2005) and Specialised Translation (Gotti and Šarčević 2006). Our research will show that the mid-to late Sixteenth century was a period of impulse to the development of specialised/erudite language in the history of English; if individual translators might remain marginal, their collective contribution to the language of religion and scholarship is certainly not negligible.