

**Dr. Hilary Brown** is a Senior Lecturer in Translation Studies at Department of Modern Languages, University of Birmingham. She is also Convenor for Postgraduate Research Programmes in Translation and Interpreting. She studies the intersection of Translation Studies, Early Modern Studies, Comparative Literature, and German Studies, particularly about transnational cultural history in the period 1500-1800 and the history of women translators. Her monographs include *Luise Gottsched the Translator* (2012), *Women and* *Early Modern Cultures of Translation: Beyond the Female Tradition* (2022) and she has also written articles on the issue of gender and translation to major reference works including the *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies* (3rd edition, 2019).

**Gender and Translation History**

**Dr Hilary Brown (University of Birmingham)**

The study of women translators in history is a vibrant sub-field of feminist translation studies and no part of this history has received more attention than the early modern period, in particular early modern England (c.1500-1700). Women such as Margaret Tyler and Aphra Behn pop up again and again in accounts of women translators. The traditional view is that translation was regarded in the past as a humble, subservient activity and thus presented women with a rare opportunity to engage in intellectual pursuits; women such as Tyler and Behn harnessed this opportunity to voice subversive and even proto-feminist ideas. The situation in early modern England is thought to apply to other countries and eras, creating the notion of a female translation tradition which has also become part of the foundational story of feminist translation studies.

This talk will challenge traditional accounts of the subversive English translators, based on research undertaken for my recently published monograph [*Women and Early Modern Cultures of Translation: Beyond the Female Tradition*](https://global.oup.com/academic/product/women-and-early-modern-cultures-of-translation-9780192844347?cc=gb&lang=en&) (Oxford University Press, 2022). My research sought to bring a new European perspective to the field by introducing the case of early modern Germany. For it is striking that the forty women currently identified as translators in the German states do not fit easily into traditional narratives about marginalisation and subversiveness. I argue that gender was a much less decisive factor in shaping women’s activities than often thought, as there were other important factors at play such as social rank, family background and religious confession. This raises intriguing questions for feminist historians, inviting us to reflect on what it will mean to write the history of women translators in future.

23 August 2022, 9.00-10.00 (online)