

ABRAHAM SYBANT TAMES *THE TAMING OF THE SHREW*  
FOR THE AMSTERDAM STAGE (1654)<sup>1</sup>

**Ton Hoenselaars**  
Utrecht University

**Jan Frans van Dijkhuizen**  
Leiden University  
The Netherlands

In recent years, translation studies have found themselves in a veritable flux. After decades of concentration on the purely linguistic correspondences between the so-called source text and the actual translation in the target language (an approach of interest only to the scholar bilingual in the two languages concerned), a clear tendency among translation critics and scholars now is to concentrate on matters contextual to the act and to the product of the act of translation. Shakespeare studies have profited greatly from this shift in emphasis. In fact, these developments in translation studies have made the non-English Shakespeare sphere many times more interesting to British Shakespeare studies. Instead of comparing linguistic variations between texts, the comparison is now between supranational political or politico-cultural issues; international Shakespeareans, it would

Ilha do Desterro	Florianópolis	nº 36	p.053-070	jan./jun. 1999
------------------	---------------	-------	-----------	----------------

appear, have found a new, abstract language in which to discuss their versions of Shakespeare alongside the (now also contested) originals.

As political Shakespeare in translation is becoming ever more popular nationally as well as internationally, many modern texts are ransacked for political relevance. Few if any critics, however, seem concerned with the earliest translations of Shakespeare. Few critics seem to wish to ponder the playwright's work that first made the Channel crossing from England to the continent of Europe, and on from there to those parts of the world other English dramatists have not reached. Surely, with all respect due to Dennis Kennedy, it is not so difficult to demonstrate that Shakespeare may still be mobilized in politically unstable areas the world over.<sup>2</sup> But why ignore the earliest Shakespeare scripts translated during the seventeenth century? Why not address those plays whose political or socio-cultural stamp is closer to Shakespeare's than anything we have at our disposal? Can we apply our new accomplishments in translation studies for historicist purposes, with the (European) continental situation of the seventeenth century providing the framework for further study? These are some of the questions that we shall address in the following re-investigation of a mid-seventeenth-century Dutch Shakespeare translation, a play, not surprisingly perhaps, closely associated with the strolling player circuit.<sup>3</sup> It concerns Abraham Sybant's *De Dolle Bruyloft* (or, *The Mad Wedding*, of 1654), the first unchallenged translation into Dutch of any of Shakespeare's works, namely *The Taming of the Shrew*.<sup>4</sup> Sybant's *Dolle Bruyloft* has received considerable attention from theatre historians and translation specialists. It is our belief, however, that a new interpretation of this Shakespeare translation may be arrived at if the Dutch text be not read in the traditional manner, with an eye to the fidelity of the translation, but as a play in its own right. If *De Dolle Bruyloft* is read seriously as a play by Abraham Sybant—as indeed it was taken when it first appeared—it becomes possible, for example, to position the comedy at the centre of a range of gender concerns in the early years of the Dutch Republic. The issues raised in this context, in

turn, may prove capable of illuminating several moments in Shakespeare's original comedy. Finally, a reconsideration of the Sybant play in the context of the primarily international scene of the strolling players strongly suggests that *De Dolle Bruyloft* was the first version of *The Taming of the Shrew* performed not only in the Low Countries but also in Germany.

*The Taming of the Shrew* was translated into Dutch by Abraham Sybant (1627-1655) in 1654. From 1646 until his early death in 1655, Sybant was associated with several companies of English and Dutch strolling players in the Low Countries, rather stable companies which in various ways contributed to introduce English Renaissance drama on the continent of Europe. Already at the age of nineteen Sybant was associated with a stage company directed by the Englishmen John Payne and William Roe. He was also allied with the very closely knit group of theatre professionals including Adriaan van den Bergh (the first Dutch translator, in 1621, of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, and father of Adriana van den Bergh, the "first" Dutch actress on the stage of the Amsterdam Schouwburg in 1655), as well as Dick Kalbergen (the husband of Elizabeth Kalbergen, née Elizabeth de Laar, another early actress at the Amsterdam Theatre).<sup>5</sup> In 1646, Abraham Sybant also began to work with Jan Baptist van Fornenbergh (1624?-1696), the dynamic leader of a company of strolling players known as the Archduke's Comedians from Brussels. The Fornenbergh company also included Gillis Nooseman (1627-1682, the future husband of Adriana van den Bergh whose daughter Maria was to be married to Jan Baptist van Fornenbergh), Salomon Fino, and Triael Parker (1619-1673, the translator, in 1646, of John Mason's *The Turk*). The company travelled the Low Countries, Northern Germany, Denmark and Sweden.<sup>6</sup> Besides his association with the strolling companies, Abraham Sybant was also regularly on the payroll of the Amsterdam Theatre where *De Dolle Bruyloft* was performed on 9 November 1654, and again on 12, 16, and 19 November of that year. Later performances were held on 4 February 1655, as well as 24 February and 7 August

1656. The increasing revenue recorded for the performances of *De Dolle Bruyloft* might indicate the play's growing success, but Van Nassau-Sarolea argues that by comparison with other productions mounted at the Amsterdam Theatre, the play must nevertheless have been relatively unsuccessful (44). Sybant's Dutch translation of James Shirley's *Love's Cruelty* (as *De Verleide Vriend*, 1655) was not more fortunate.

*De Dolle Bruyloft* shows considerable craftsmanship, often following the English original very closely and creatively, despite the apparent need to fashion the Shakespeare text into rhyming alexandrines, including the prose. Partly because of Sybant's obvious precision, one of the more remarkable features about this translation of *The Taming of the Shrew* is that it lacks the Induction with Christopher Sly, as well as part of the wager scene. Van Nassau-Sarolea has suggested that the Dutch translator may have worked with a copy from which a number of pages of the opening and a number of pages at the end were missing. Sadly, this view was taken over by Robert Leek who assumed that if Sybant's copy of *The Taming of the Shrew* had been falling apart, it would have been a "sixty-year-old and well-thumbed quarto" (*Shakespeare in Nederland*, 23), thus dangerously suggesting that there may have been a quarto of Shakespeare's comedy before 1631. Given the fact that the Dutch play contains substantial sections of the Italian opening scene in the Shakespeare text, it is certain that, even under the worst of circumstances, Sybant knew of the Sly character from his intervention at the end of Act 1, scene 1, and eschewed the option of metatheatrical comment.<sup>7</sup> Given the fact that the Dutch play also contains substantial sections of the wager scene, including Katherina's famous monologue, Sybant is likely to have had the entire text at his disposal, and to have decided to cut.

As a translator—who could have used the 1631 Quarto, or one of the earliest folio editions of Shakespeare's plays (F1 1623, F2 1632)—Sybant has a scrupulous eye for detail, managing, as Leek has convincingly demonstrated, to preserve even the complex music

vocabulary in the lute episode of Act 2, scene 1 (*Shakespeare in Nederland*, 22-23). If anything, however, Sybant excels at creative additions to the Shakespeare text, as though the original kindled the translator's own poetic imagination. This is already noticeable in the expository scene between Grumio and Petruchio. Early in this scene, Grumio tells Hortensio that in return for gold Petruchio would even accept a wife with "as many diseases as two and fifty horses" (1.1.79-80). In the translation, Sybant does not shrink from listing fever, colic, podagra, gout, lameness, and several other far from pleasant ailments. In a similar vein, Sybant introduces into the text original imagery or Dutch idioms as a means of clarifying the dialogue. Sybant's equivalent to the idea of 'acting on behalf of Petruchio,' is the somewhat ambiguous "rolling the bowling ball on behalf of your master" (sig. A4<sup>r</sup>), and the idea of obtaining greater benefit is rendered by the idiom "to make the knife cut on both sides" (sig. A4<sup>r</sup>). When Petruchio explains to Hortensio how he told Grumio to knock on the door, his Dutch counterpart adds that it was "like speaking to a deaf person, like mixing wine in the sea" (sig. A5<sup>r</sup>). And Grumio's simple line "Will he woo her? Ay, or I'll hang her," is translated as "Yes, he not woo her? Surely! / Even if she were a devil, and her saliva dragon spit" (sig. A7<sup>v</sup>).

Besides such obvious verbal marks of creative enjoyment, Sybant's hand may be discerned in the larger structure of the play. Most changes can be interpreted as part of a strategy to align the Shakespeare text with the neo-classical rules for drama, particularly those bearing on the three unities. From this perspective, the omission of the Cotswold-based Induction to the comedy set in Padua would make sense as an attempt to reestablish unity of place, and arguably also unity of action. The latter unity, it would seem, was also pursued by eliminating Hortensio's widow from the final scene of the play. An attempt to restore the related unities of time and place may be seen in the change of Petruchio's decision that the wedding should be on Sunday (2.1.291), to having the wedding on the following day (sig. B5<sup>v</sup>). This alteration, serving as a means of shortening the time of the

action, is supported by the decision to preserve the unity of place as far as possible, namely by changing Petruchio's decision to travel to Venice for wedding clothes and jewellery (2.1.315), to the vague announcement that he must be off to arrange matters for the wedding.<sup>8</sup>

Without meaning to undermine the allegation that Sybant often followed the English original very closely and had a scrupulous eye for detail, a discussion of the translation would not be complete without reference to what is arguably Sybant's most intriguing addition to the original Shakespeare play. This is his introduction of a character named "Slobbetje," a servant to Petruchio, who is also female. Interestingly, she takes part in a discussion, opening Act 4, on the way in which, the marriage contract signed, the same male partner who had spent all his time in polite courtship, tends to dwindle into a boor:

But Jesu, Peter Milksop was a gentleman, but how easily a sheep may change into a bear. It makes my head spin. He used to be ever so pious. Should his late father see this, he would be sad indeed.

*(De Dolle Bruyloft, 44)*

For an appreciation of this change it is worth noting first that where the acting personnel was concerned, the rules in the Low Countries were highly similar to those prevailing in England. On the London stage, as on the official Dutch stages, only male players were permitted.<sup>9</sup> With regard to Shakespeare's comedy, this explains why Petruchio has male servants only; a boy actor for so small a part would be too much of an investment. Given the fact that the situations in London and Amsterdam were so similar, the question arises why Sybant should have introduced an additional *female* role where Shakespeare had conveniently suggested male servants? Why would Abraham Sybant create casting difficulties if the easiest option was to avoid them? Did Sybant have an actress in mind? Of course, both in England and in the Low Countries there were obvious exceptions to the rule limiting full gender

participation on stage. In the English tradition of the court masque and other types of court entertainment, for example, it was not unusual for women to participate in the stage spectacle. And with regard to the Amsterdam stage, the chorus of women (“Edelingen” and “Klarissen”) in Joost van den Vondel’s *Gijsbrecht van Aemstel* was sung by two women on stage in 1648 and in 1651.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the strolling companies, with their tight family structure, also had women acting in their productions, even before they were, like Adriana van den Bergh in March of 1655, first officially recorded as paid actresses.<sup>11</sup> As Ben Albach puts it: “Seventeenth-century audiences had seen women on the stage before, but not in their venerable municipal theatre. For in the case of the strolling players it is obvious that the women and children of the artists were mobilized as well”.<sup>12</sup> This practice explains why, after the unexpected departure of six players from the Amsterdam Theatre in February 1655, Gillis Nooseman could convince the city council to employ the acting skills of his wife Adriana—who was already known to act “non pareilje” (or *sans pareil*)—to ensure performances in March of that same year (Albach, 59 and 73). Given Sybant’s affiliation with both the strolling players and the official Amsterdam Theatre, one is tempted to conjecture that although *De Dolle Bruyloft* was ultimately produced on the latter stage, it was originally conceived of as a play for the wandering circuit (from which it may originally also have come) — the circuit of strolling players which, until March 1655, included such skilled actresses as Adriana Noosemans and Elizabeth Kalbergen. In that case, the odd 4-line part of the female servant “Slobbetje” might make sense. However, with such fine actresses in the company, Sybant may even have been thinking of them for the other female parts, those of Katherina and Biancha. The actresses may well have determined Sybant’s choice of play.

It were wrong to consider Abraham Sybant’s translation as part of a mid-seventeenth century women’s emancipation movement. The acceptance of the first actresses on the boards of the Amsterdam Theatre certainly marked an important step in this respect. But Sybant’s

translation of *The Taming of the Shrew* adopted a curiously male chauvinist stance in the controversy to which Shakespeare invited his London audiences. This is best illustrated with reference to the play's final scene, and its famous parting statement on gender relations. Sybant, who during the rest of the play had shown himself such an inventive translator, here takes Katherina's speech, strips it of all imagery and ambiguity, and confronts his audience with an utterance that is chilling in its conformity. This is Abraham Sybant's 1654 rendering of the monologue by Katrijn (the Dutch Katherina, who is also referred to as "Trijn," "Katrina," and "Kataryna"):

I wish my sister well in her affections,  
 But to arrive at a desirable peace  
 Obedience is a good law for you,  
 Following whatever your husband proposes.  
 Obedience never lessened a woman,  
 But obstinacy has hindered many.  
 Heaven dictates our true obedience,  
 Not that we sinfully oppose man's will:  
 Anger and wrath lead the soul to perdition.  
 One must be obedient if one wishes to inherit Heaven.  
 Be not surprised to hear me speak thus:  
 Until today I was a fool—I now speak what I know.  
 It has pleased heaven to grieve my soul  
 With the aim, from now on, to please Heaven.  
 This then is a way to satisfy Heaven,  
 My way of reconciling with my husband and friends.  
 My father, please forgive me, and you, my sister, too,  
 If sinfully I ever did you wrong.  
 And you, my worthy half, whom I with will and heart  
 Shall please, whichever way your will be drawn.<sup>13</sup>

In her highly informative article on the play Van Nassau-Sarolea comments that Katherina's final monologue "reminds us of a sermon"

(54). The unmistakable patriarchal tenor, as well as the obvious references to Heaven, obedience, sin, and forgiveness place the monologue firmly within a Christian, perhaps also Calvinist framework. However, Van Nassau-Sarolea ignores a more specific tradition to which the speech of Shakespeare's Katherina, and certainly that of the Dutch Katherina belongs, namely the marriage-counselling tradition.<sup>14</sup> This tradition explains why Katherina's speech unmistakably echoes the most widely read author on the subject in the Low Countries, Jacob Cats. Cats's immensely popular poem *Houwelick* (or *Marriage*), was first published in 1625, and had sold no less than fifty-thousand copies when his *Complete Works* appeared (as *Alle de Werken*) in 1655. It is within the context of Jacob Cats's poetry, and of his *Houwelick* in particular, that one had best appreciate Katherine's speech in Dutch. The male voice in Cats's verse counsels the female addressee, the newly married woman, that a man who may on occasion commit an error, nevertheless needs, "to be loved in God / And for the sake of God. He needs to be supported, / Because such conduct in your profession [as a housewife] best satisfies the Lord."<sup>15</sup> The woman is also given a voice of her own in Cats's verse. She speaks to the reader on behalf of her sex as follows:

I know how God has elevated man above us,  
How he has given his noble mind a higher nature.  
I know my shortcomings, but nevertheless  
A weak woman, too, is serviceable to man.

(*Houwelick*, "Vrouwe," 179, col. 2)

There are many more examples from Cats's didactic and influential verse to suggest a likely subtext to Katherine's final monologue in the Dutch version of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Yet, for fear of misrepresenting Cats as a scribbler of second-rate verse or as a reactionary thinker on matters marital, it ought to be stressed that his verse is often truly inspired, unlike the final speech of *De Dolle Bruyloft*.



It need not come as a surprise that the first criticism of Sybant's play also centred around the character of Katherina. It is contained in the first of two dedicatory sonnets prefaced to the Sybant play, the sonnet written by fellow-actor Adriaan Bastiaansz. de Leeuw. Following a comparison (traditional though flattering), between Terence and Sybant, and a no less trite reference to the songs that will be sung in the Dutchman's praise on Mount Parnassus, Adriaan de Leeuw ends his sonnet with the curious lines, that play on the translator's name, which literally means "silk band":

And Sybant binds Katherina as with a silk band;  
Yes, forces her at the end who first wanted to force all others.

...

*En Sybant bind' Katrijn als aan een zyen bind;  
Ja dwingt op't lest die geen die yder eerst wou dwingen.*  
(*De Dolle Bruyloft*, sig. A2<sup>r</sup>)

In view of the fate of Katherina in the Dutch play, who would disagree with Adriaan de Leeuw's move to elevate the translator to the level of the tamer. It is Sybant, he suggests, who has tamed Katherina. With her, of course, he has also tamed the text, especially if we may interpret the Dutch phrase "op't lest" [or, at the end] as a reference to the famous final monologue.

The marriage-counselling tradition and the poetry of Jacob Cats help to bring into focus some of the cross-currents underlying the socio-historical position of Abraham Sybant's *Dolle Bruyloft* in the Netherlands. On the one hand, the text suggests what was happening in reality, namely, that the woman as actress was gaining ground on the mid-seventeenth century Dutch stage. In and around *De Dolle Bruyloft* one intuits a process of women's emancipation that was soon to be officially secured commercially. On the other hand one witnesses a tendency that runs counter to this social trend. The presentation of Katherina—especially in her greatly refashioned monologue—marks

what may be fairly termed an inverse endeavour to contain the emancipating sex. Rather than define these phenomena as cross-currents, one might speak of two forces in a delicate balance. The suggestion created is that women might be allowed on stage—as characters or as actresses—if they supported an unambiguous marital policy. Adriana's marriage to actor-playwright Gillis Nooseman would no doubt have facilitated her introduction as an actress on the official stage of the Amsterdam Theatre. The fact that she would frequently act the leading role against her actor-husband Gillis in plays that glorified marriage—including Jacob Cats's only play *The Royal Shepherdess Aspasia*—must have helped.

### Postscript

Despite Abraham Sybant's obvious efforts and his colleagues' praise, *De Dolle Bruyloft* was not really a popular play, with only seven recorded performances in the Low Countries between 1654 and 1656. However, the play may have had a more colourful career than has so far been recognised, introducing Shakespeare's tamer and his shrew to German audiences as well. *The Taming of the Shrew* was popular in Germany where the earliest extant manifestation of the play is the anonymous translation and adaptation of 1672 entitled *Kunst über all Künste ein böß Weib gut zu machen* (or, in English, *Art above all Arts to Tame a Shrew*).<sup>17</sup> The author's address to the reader alludes to the popularity of the comedy, saying that it "has [...] been often represented by comedians on the stage."<sup>18</sup> However, a reassessment of the available archival sources leads us to conclude that, following its production and publication in Amsterdam, Sybant's shrew play was again performed at the German town of Zittau in Saxony (near Dresden) in 1658. As Albert Cohn reminds us, on 5, 6, and 7 March of that year, the students of the Gymnasium of Zittau represented four plays. One of these was entitled *Die wunderbare Heurath Petruvio mit der bösen Catherine*.<sup>19</sup> As Cohn's own translation of the German title already bears out, its

similarities with the Dutch title are too close to be considered lightly (Cohn, cxxiv). Like Sybant's title, the German title—"The Surprising marriage [or, wedding] of Petruvio with the wicked Catherine"—replaces the activity of "taming" by the more abstract notion of "marriage" or "wedding". Also both the Sybant title and the German title—with the adjective that stresses the surprising, the incomprehensible—draw attention to the singular nature of the marital bond central to the plot. J. A. Worp failed to note this double parallel between the two continental shrew plays when, fifteen years after the publication of Cohn's masterpiece, he identified the Sybant comedy as a Shakespeare translation. Worp's oversight is made to look even more curious when one notes that the Zittau title of the play is foreshadowed also in the second line of the 10-line sonnet by Jan van Daalen, prefaced to the 1654 edition of Sybant's comedy:

The stage now shows us here, in Sybant's measured rhymes,  
A strange case of courtship between Groom and Bride.

...

*Tooneel vertoont ons hier in Sybants maatgezangen  
Een wonderlijk gevry van Bruydegom en Bruydt.*<sup>20</sup>

The striking double parallel on various levels suggests that rather than to assume, as Cohn does, that *Die wunderbare Heurath* was "brought to Germany by the English Comedians," it is more appropriate to assume that it was the German *Wandertruppen* who adapted a Dutch play, along the lines sketched by Albach. The repertory lists of Michel Daniel Treu and Karl Andreas Paulsen indeed contain titles that are translations of plays performed abroad by the Dutch comedians with Jan Baptist van Fornenbergh. They include Joost van den Vondel's *The Brothers* and his *Joseph* trilogy, as well as Jacob Cats's *Aspasia*, and the plays of Jan Vos, including that other Shakespeare spin-off entitled *Aran and Titus*. This leads Albach to conclude that "In the same way the first Dutch strolling companies took over English plays in adaptations of

their own, the successful plays from Amsterdam ended up with the *Wandertruppen*" (101). It would appear that Abraham Sybant's *De Dolle Bruyloft* at one stage became part of this international network.

The case of Abraham Sybant's *De Dolle Bruyloft* highlights several issues. It argues that the earliest continental versions of Shakespeare may still deserve closer study than they have so far received. Historical research still yields new information, and such research, in turn, fuels our investigations of the original Shakespeare scripts. Also, a textual comparison between Shakespeare's original and later renderings of his plays—if not primarily studied as translations in the traditional linguistic sense of the term—still yield valuable new insights into either text. Finally, the case of Abraham Sybant illustrates that any such comparative work ought not to be confined to texts from the source country, England, and one other European country. The dissemination of Shakespeare at this early stage was already a truly continental rather than a national affair. Translation studies, it would appear, has so far failed to occupy its own territory in modern Shakespeare studies.

## Notes

- 1 In our research, we have enjoyed the expert advice and encouragement of Ben Albach. We also acknowledge the assistance of Cees Schoneveld (Leiden University), Susan Brock (The Shakespeare Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon), and the staff of the library of the University of Amsterdam.
- 2 *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance*, ed. Dennis Kennedy (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993).
- 3 On the strolling players see E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), II: 270-94; Albert Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: An Account of English Actors in Germany and The Netherlands and of the Plays Performed by Them during the Same Period* (1865. Rpt. New York, NY: Haskell House Publishers, 1971); and W. M. A. Creizenach, *Schauspiele der englischen Komödianten* (Stuttgart, 1889). See also J. A. Worp, "De invloed der Engelsche letterkunde op ons tooneel in de 17de eeuw," in *De Tijdspiegel*, 3 (1887), 266-300; *id.*, *Geschiedenis van het drama en van het*

*tooneel in Nederland*, 2 vols. (Groningen: J. B. Wolters, 1904-1908); E. F. Kossmann, *Nieuwe Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Tooneel in de 17de en 18de eeuw* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1915); Ben Albach, *Langs kermissen en hoven: ontstaan en kroniek van een Nederlands toneelgezelschap in de 17de eeuw* (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1977); and Jerzy Limon, *Gentlemen of a Company: English Players in Central and Eastern Europe, 1590-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1985). For additional information on Dutch theatre history, the reader is referred to *German and Dutch Theatre, 1600-1848*, compiled by George W. Brandt and Wiebe Hoogendoorn, and edited by George W. Brandt, *Theatre in Europe: A Documentary History* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993).

- 4 *De Dolle bruyloft: Bly-eyndend'-Spel. Gerijmt door A. Sybant* (Amsterdam: Tymon Houthaak, 1654). For a survey of earlier contenders, see Robert H. Leek, *Shakespeare in Nederland: Kroniek van vier eeuwen Shakespeare in Nederlandse vertalingen en op het Nederlands toneel* (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1988), 15-24. For an English version of this study, the reader is referred to Robert-Henri Leek, "Shakespeare in The Netherlands: A Study of Dutch Translations and Dutch Performances of William Shakespeare's Plays," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Auckland, 2 vols. (Auckland, n.d. [=1972]). See also Robert-H. Leek, "Bless Thee, Bottom, Bless Thee! Thou Art Translated!": The Bard and His Dutch Interpreters," in *Something Understood: Studies in Anglo-Dutch Literary Translation*, ed. Bart Westerweel and Theo D'haen, DQR Studies in Literature (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi, 1990), 139-70.
- 5 "Amsterdam Theatre" is a convenient phrase to refer to the first municipal theatre in the Dutch capital, the so-called *Amsterdamse Schouwburg*, inaugurated with a performance of Joost van den Vondel's *Gysbrecht van Aemstel* in 1638. For further information, see *German and Dutch Theatre, 1600-1848*.
- 6 For this biographical information, we are heavily indebted to Ben Albach, *Langs kermissen en hoven*; and Annie van Nassau-Sarolea, "Abraham Sybant, Strolling Player and First Dutch Shakespeare Translator," *Theatre Research / Recherches Théâtrales* 13:1 (1973), 38-59.
- 7 William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Brian Morris, New Arden Edition (London and New York: Methuen, 1981), 1.1.248-53.
- 8 Van Nassau-Sarolea suggests that the change from "Sunday" to "tomorrow" may have been determined by the pedestrian fact that "A wedding day on Sunday would be most unusual, if not objectionable to the Dutch audience, who for the

greater part were orthodox Protestants (Calvinists)" ("Abraham Sybant, Strolling Player," 50). This conjecture does not account for the greater haste and the consequent omission of "Venice" from the text. The neo-classical rules help to account for both in relation to one another. For a more detailed comparison between the Shakespeare text and the Sybant translation, the reader is referred to Van Nassau-Sarolea's article.

- 9 For a detailed discussion of the Dutch situation, and the appearance of the first actress on the Amsterdam stage, see Ben Albach, "De onvergetelijke Ariana: De eerste Amsterdamse toneelspeelster," in *Spiegel Historiae*, 29 (1994), 79-83. [The term "onvergetelijke" (or, unforgettable) is an editorial misrepresentation of "onvergelijkelijke" (or, *sans pareil*)].
- 10 Much attention has been devoted to the English situation in recent years. For a rich survey, see *Renaissance Drama by Women: Texts and Documents*, ed. S. P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (London and New York: Routledge, 1996). See also Ben Albach, *Drie Eeuwen "Gijsbrecht": Kroniek van de Jaarlijkse Opvoeringen* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandse Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1937), 30.
- 11 Her first recorded performance, however, dates from 19 April 1655 (Kossmann, *Nieuwe Bijdragen*, 105).
- 12 Albach, 73. All English quotations in the text have been translated by the authors of this article.
- 13 *De Dolle Bruyloft*, 63 (re-translation by the authors).
- 14 See Alice Clare Carter, "Marriage Counselling in the Early Seventeenth Century: England and the Netherlands Compared," in *Ten Studies in Anglo-Dutch Relations*, ed. Jan van Dorsten (London: Oxford UP, 1974), 94-127. For a broader sketch of the situation, see A. Th. van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen: Het kopergeld van de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1992), 101-16. But compare Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London: Collins, 1987), 375-480 ("Housewives and Hussies: Homeliness and Worldliness").
- 15 *Alle de Werken van Jacob Cats. Met eene Levensbeschrijving van den Dichter* (Schiedam, n.d.), "Vrouwe," 178, col. 1 (translation by the authors).

- 16 In the Dutch version of Abraham Sybant's play, the text runs as follows: "PETRUTIO: *Zyt gy voor my beschaamt?* KATRIJN: *Neen, ver van daar; maar hier het kussen niet betaamt*" (62).
- 17 The title page of *Kunst über all Künste ein böß Weib gut zu machen* lists the Swiss town of Rapperswil ("Rapperschweyl") as its place of publication, but the real place of publication must have been in Germany. The location of Rapperswil has now been repudiated as a fiction devised, arguably for political reasons, by the play's German publisher Henning Liebler. For further information about the Rapperswil edition of the play, see Martin Bircher and Heinrich Straumann, *Shakespeare und die deutsche Schweiz bis zum Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts: Eine Bibliographie Raisonnée* (Bern and Munich: A. Francke AG Verlag, 1971), 42.
- 18 Albert Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, cxxv [Orig.: "schon offt von Comoedianten auff dem Schauplatz für gestellt worden," cxxvi].
- 19 Albert Cohn, *Shakespeare in Germany*, cxxiv-cxxv.
- 20 See *De Dolle Bruyloft*, sig. A2<sup>r</sup>. J. A. Worp, "Eene Hollandsche vertaling uit de zeventiende eeuw van Shaksperes *The Taming of the Shrew*," *De Nederlandsche Spectator* (The Hague, 1880). In her discussion of Sybant's play, Annie van Nassau-Sarolea also refers to the Zittau performance, but she follows Creizenach (in *Die Schauspiele der englischen Komödianten*, Stuttgart, 1889), who argued that the Gymnasium play was a version of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* based on the text used by the actors who performed "*englische Komödien*" in the town hall at Zittau in 1650 (Nassau-Sarolea, 39n11).

## Bibliography

- Albach, Ben. *Langs kermessen en hoven: ontstaan en kroniek van een Nederlands toneelgezelschap in de 17de eeuw*. Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1977.
- Bircher, Martin Bircher and Heinrich Straumann. *Shakespeare und die deutsche Schweiz bis zum Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts: Eine Bibliographie Raisonnée*. Bern and Munich: A. Francke AG Verlag, 1971.
- [Jacob Cats]. *Alle de Werken van Jacob Cats. Met eene Levensbeschrijving van den Dichter*. (Schiedam, n.d.).

Cohn, Albert. *Shakespeare in Germany in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: An Account of English Actors in Germany and The Netherlands and of the Plays Performed by Them during the Same Period* (1865). New York, NY: Haskell House Publishers, 1971.

Leek, Robert H. *Shakespeare in Nederland: Kroniek van vier eeuwen Shakespeare in Nederlandse vertalingen en op het Nederlands toneel*. Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1988.

Nassau-Sarolea, Annie van. "Abraham Sybant, Strolling Player and First Dutch Shakespeare Translator." *Theatre Research / Recherches Théâtrales* 13:1 (1973): 38-59.

[Abraham Sybant]. *De Dolle bruyloft: Blyeyndend'-Spel. Gerijmt door A. Sybant*. Amsterdam: Tymon Houthaak, 1654.