

Meeting in Mantua

The Mediterranean Editors and Translators Meeting is a highlight in many calendars. Francesca Matteoda reports on this year's conference

For those of you unfamiliar with the Mediterranean Editors and Translators Meeting (METM) conferences, you should know that although the event itself is held over two days (Friday and Saturday), there are always after-dinner drinks on the Wednesday night for early arrivals, and pre-conference workshops on the Thursday afternoon and Friday morning.

This year in Mantua was no different. I was fortunate enough to arrive on Wednesday 11 October and readily headed over to the Caffè Sociale for drinks at 9pm, thinking I would meet up with a few of the usual suspects, but the place soon became a multicultural hub of linguists of diverse backgrounds, nationalities and languages. It was wonderful to catch up with old friends, including many ITI members, but also great to see so many new faces! If I am not mistaken, a quarter of attendees were new.

Walking and talking (and yoga)

The following morning, there was a guided walking tour of Mantua. We assembled by the bronze statue of Rigoletto at 10am and embarked on a two-hour tour, which allowed us to take in some of the beautiful sites and learn some history.

In the afternoon, I attended Thomas O'Boyle's three-hour workshop 'Signposting the way: using punctuation to improve flow', which was excellent. It's always good to brush up on virgules, octothorps and interrobangs, no matter how much of a grammar geek you are! This ran alongside four other workshops dealing with art, science, gender-inclusive language, and tactics for managing focus and projects, which were followed by a one-hour yoga session hosted by yours truly and/or a translation slam from Italian into English.

Another five workshops were held on the Friday morning, covering a variety of topics including genre analysis, AI use for language professionals, quantitative research, preparation for speaking in public, and using Excel.

Starting the conference itself with an FITI

At 3pm Emma Goldsmith, MET's chair (who, incidentally, is also an FITI and a regular *Bulletin* contributor), welcomed us all, and the conference proper started with three parallel presentations covering Esperanto, translating cosmetics, and the immune system. In the coffee break afterwards we sampled some of the best coffee and pastries to be had at a conference venue ever.

Federico Federici, Professor of Intercultural Crisis Communication at the Centre for Translation Studies, University College London, gave the first keynote speech, entitled 'Translating in acute crises – on texts, contexts, and languages', which was truly fascinating even for those of us not working in the field. We then headed to the welcome reception in a beautiful room at the sumptuous Ca' degli Uberti Palace Hotel for an hour or so from 7.30pm.

On the Saturday, the presentations started at 9am and again covered a vast range of topics, such as interactive translation sessions from French, German, Italian and Spanish into


English, an interactive Microsoft Word session and an interactive editing session, to name just a few.

The second keynote speech was given by Luisa Bentivogli from the Fondazione Bruno Kessler, Trento, Italy, who spoke to us about 'Large language models and language professionals: understanding the promises, risks and impact'.

Next year in Carcassonne

The MET General Assembly was held in the afternoon, and as always, there was a raffle for attendees, with succulent prizes for the lucky winners. And – as is traditional – the location for next year's METM was announced.

However, there was also a break from tradition, as METM24 will be held in France – in Carcassonne, to be precise – from 17 to 19 October 2024.

It all came to a close with a fabulous dinner held at the Ristorante Rigoletto, followed by music and dancing into the early hours. Once again I can say that METM struck the perfect balance between fun and learning, and I for one came away relaxed and more knowledgeable, even though post-conference fatigue hit me hard once I returned home! 

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Francesca Matteoda started translating in-house in 1997 and has been working as a freelance translator since 2000. She specialises in medical and pharmaceutical translations from French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish into UK English and is also a fully qualified hatha yoga instructor. She was born and raised in London's West End, but has been living in Madrid, Spain, since 2001. She has been a Qualified Member of ITI since 2007, a Fellow since May 2022 and a mentor since 2016. In 2020 she won the ITI Mentor of the Year award, and she served on the ITI board for two and a half years.