

Poetry and Science, From the Renaissance to Enlightenment

University of York, 25–27 June 2026

Preliminary programme (subject to change)

Thursday, 25 June 2026

09:00–09:30	<i>Registration & Coffee</i>	
09:30–09:45	Welcome	
09:45–11:00	Keynote: Tita Chico (Maryland): Georgical Technologies	
11:00–11:30	<i>Coffee</i>	
11:30–13:00	Poetry of the tiny Chair: Florian Klaeger	Poetry of the heavens Chair: Cassie Gorman
	Chloe Holmquist (Toronto): Towards a Poetics of Particulars	Barbara Bienias (Warsaw): ‘Analogie is the seeming fittest...’ – On tropes and genres in the pursuit of knowledge in early modern English writings
	Ivana Bičak (Bilkent): Neo-Latin Worlds Under the Microscope	Rachel White (Durham): Poetic Drafting in William Bellgrave’s Astrological Notebook (1627-c.1693)
	Emily Whittingham (York): Ink blots, full stops, and exclamation points: Punctuating the poetics of microscopy in the work of Henry Baker	Irina Tautschnig (York): Verses in Transit: Poetic Observations of Mercury and Venus in the Sun
13:00–14:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
14:00–15:30	Cavendish I Chair: Helen Smith	Poetry of the body Chair: Frankie Taylor
	Line Cottagnies (Sorbonne): Margaret Cavendish’s Long Narrative Poems: Allegorical Parables or Speculative Fables?	Dominika Tokarz (Cracow): (In)Visible Writing Bodies: Relations Between Physiology and Feminism in “Songs Sung to Myself” by Konstancja Benisławska
	Masuda Qureshi (Birkbeck): Infinites of Matters: materialist philosophy in Cavendish’s Philosophical Fancies and Poems and Fancies	Cassie Gorman (Cambridge): Poetic Mock-Physic: The Curious Case of the Maid and the Carpenter
	Sophie White (York): “In the Braine may dwell little small Fairies; who can tell?” Tracing the emergence of embodied cognition in the scientific poetry of Margaret Cavendish	Bénédicte Prot (Basel): Convalescence in Poetry (France, 1700-1750)
15:30–16:00	<i>Coffee</i>	
16:00–17:30	Poetry of numbers Chair: Benedikt Wittenberg	Poetry of alchemy Chair: Friederike Altmann

	Jonathan Sawday (St Louis): The Poetics of Large Numbers, Or, Why Archbishop Ussher Was Not Completely Wrong	Jennifer M. Rampling (Princeton): George Ripley's Dream: Allegories of Practice in Fifteenth-Century England
	Bethany Dubow (Oxford): Broken Numbers: 'New' Mathematics and The Faerie Queene	Sergei Zotov (Warburg): Rhymed Images: Alchemical Verse, Iconography, and Self-Fashioning in Herbrandt Jamsthaler's <i>Viatorium spagyricum</i>
	Anna Kapuścińska-Jawara (Szczecin): Poetry and Science in Early Modern Mathematical Pedagogy: Stanislaw Soliski's (1622–1701) Versified Arithmetic (Geometra Polski)	Magnus Diers (Aarhus): Bannerholt Reforming Mythoalchemical Allegory: Early Modern Alchemy, the Early Royal Society, and Richard Kemp's Virgilian Quest into Mexico's Mines
17:30–18:00	Wine	
19:00	<i>Dinner in city (self-pay unfortunately)</i>	

Friday 26 June 2026

08:30–09:00	<i>Coffee</i>	
09:00–10:30	Hybridities Chair: Emily Whittingham	Neo-Latin scientific didactic Chair: Irina Tautschnig
	Ted Tregear (Oxford): Concept and Conceit in Early Modern Lyric	Stefano Gulizia (Venice): Pontano's scientific poetry: knowledge, power, tradition
	Marina Aguilar Salinas (UNED): Hybridity: The Triangle between Poetry, Philosophy, and Natural Science in the Work of María de Camporredondo	Maximilian G. Pierl (Freiburg): To narrate or not to narrate? The interplay of narrative and non-narrative elements in selected Neo-Latin early modern didactic epics
	Nadine Schmidt (Siegen): The Waterman's Way: John Taylor the Water-Poet and His Proto-Ecological Poetics of the Thames	David Russell (Sussex): A Goddess, a Physician, a Woman, a Shepherd, a Hunter, and a Dog Walk into a Spa: Early Modern Scatological Humour as Critique of the Rhetoric of Girolamo Fracastoro's Mythopoetic Syphilography
10:30–11:00	<i>Coffee</i>	
11:00–12:30	Cavendish II Chair: Corinna Dobmeier	Scientific poetry & the classics Chair: Cassie Gorman
	Jessie Hock (Vanderbilt): Margaret Cavendish's Speculative Poetics	Katherine Calloway (Baylor): George Herbert's Poetic Engagement with Epicureanism
	Alex Davis (St Andrews): Honeycomb Figures: Margaret Cavendish, Bees, and the Blazing World	Emma Perkins (Cambridge): Edward Sherburne's Sphere of Manilius: poetry and the new astronomy
	Meaghan Allen (Manchester): All the Blood like to": Circulations,	Liz Oakley Brown (Lancaster): On Bodies, Barometers and 'Poetical

	Spirits, and Natural Philosophy in Margaret Cavendish's 'Of the Motion of the Blood' (1653)	Embellishments': Samuel Garth and Jacob Tsonson's Enlightenment Ovid
12:30–14:00	Lunch (plus exhibition in <i>Thin Ice Press</i>)	
14:00–15:30	Milton Chair: Kevin Killeen	Reason and knowledge making Chair: Max Schotte
	Ayelet C. Langer (Haifa): Milton's Poetics of Motion	Ellie Rebecca Bunker (Sussex): "Stumbling From Thought to Thought": Reason and the Irrational Mind in Poetry, Neurology, and Philosophy in the Seventeenth and early Eighteenth Centuries
	Eric Langley (UCL): To justify the ways of God...: The Providential Geometry of Paradise Lost	Flavio Auer (Freiburg): Rationalism and Empiricism in Early Enlightenment Scientific Poetry. Christlob Mylius on Speculation and Contemplation
	Vladimir Brljak (Durham): Miltonic Cosmology in Victorian Edinburgh: James Gall's The Stars and the Angels	Kristin Girten (Nebraska Omaha): Sense, Sensibility, and the Poetry of Early Modern Science: Henry Baker and Erasmus Darwin
15:30–16:00	<i>Coffee</i>	
16:00–17:30	Keynote: Kathryn Murphy (Oxford): tbc	
19:00	<i>Conference dinner</i>	

Saturday, 27 June 2026

08:30–09:00	<i>Coffee</i>	
09:00–10:30	Roundtable: Making an anthology of scientific poetry	
10:30–11:00	<i>Coffee</i>	
11:00–12:30	Women's scientific poetry Chair: Maja Rausch	Poetic knowledge of nature Chair: Annalena Bauer
	Danielle Clarke (UCD): Women Reading Natural Philosophy with Du Bartas	Florian Klaeger (Bayreuth): Henry Reynolds on science in poetry, and how to read it
	Kevin Killeen (York): Mary Chudleigh's Panoptical science	Caitlín Rankin-McCabe (Melbourne): Samuel Pordage's Epic Diagram
	Charlotte Newcombe (York): "Understanding Lucretius: Lucy Hutchinson's Transformation of <i>De rerum natura</i> "	Helen Smith (York): Does Poetry Matter?
12:30–13:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
13:30–15:00	Hester Pulter Chair: Charlotte Newcombe	Poetics Chair: Florian Klaeger
	Anjali Vyas-Brannick (York): Attention in the Emblem Poems of Hester Pulter	Benedikt Wittenberg (Bayreuth): "Costly Births of Worthless Matter: Trifles in the Poetics of Scientific Poetry"

	Jess Dunmore (Cambridge): 'Shades of night': Astronomical Twilight in Hester Pulter and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz	Alison Searle (Leeds): Literary Form, Passions, and the Vulgar: Richard Baxter's Poetics and 'Poetical Fragments'
	Lizzie Swann (Durham): Pulter, Cavendish, and the Poetics of Scientific Solace	Rana Banna (UCL): From Brasen to Golden: Transformative Poetics and Early-Modern Science
15:00–15:30	<i>Coffee</i>	
15:30–16:30	Scientists as poets Chair: Irina Tautschnig	Playful science Chair: Kevin Killeen
	James Ungureanu (Carthage College): From Vates to Virtuoso: The Poetic Genius and the Birth of the Scientific Cleric	Michael Powell-Davies (Birkbeck): Beyond Utility: Poetry and Play in William Leybourn's Practical Mathematics, 1647-1653
	J. D. Eynard (East Anglia): 'Both Poet & Physitian': The Scientific Poetry of John Speed (1628-1711)	Barbara Popiel-Kobielska (Szczecin): Poetic riddles: between poetry, games with the reader and science
16:30–17:00	Closing remarks	