

**Multilingualism from Alexander to Charlemagne:
cross-cultural themes and perspectives**

29–30th May 2009 at the Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge

Abstracts of papers

Friday 29th May 2009

Multilingualism and ritual language - Alderik Blom

This paper deals with one aspect of ritual language from late antiquity and the early middle ages, namely the use of (perceived) foreign elements (phrases and tags), as well as non-lexical utterances, or *voces magicae*. Drawing on a variety of prayers, incantations, charms, and curses from several traditions, it analyses the various manifestations of this ritual code-switching, and situates the use of *voces magicae* within this wider perspective. It also illustrates the often wilful tendency toward obscurity in the ritual use of phrases and tags, and its relation to, and frequent overlap with, the use of *voces magicae*.

Multilingualism in Sicily and Southern Italy in the Early Middle Ages: issues in the nature and interpretation of the evidence - Rosanna Sornicola

Sicily and Southern Italy can provide interesting instances of the methodological problems that must be dealt with when studying ancient multilingualism and its diachronic implications. The aim of this paper is a discussion that faces these problems, especially those related to the scarcity and ambiguity of the direct or indirect documentation. Another problem that will be discussed concerns the fact that Sicily and the Southern areas of Italy are lands - from the era of Augustus to that of Charlemagne - with a long and dramatic history of political, economic and social upheavals. This inevitably reflects itself in the diachrony of the linguistic varieties present in the area, which have undergone impressive changes and discontinuities.

The arguments presented point to the general conclusion that historical sociolinguistics is a possible but difficult subject, which must be tackled with the utmost care.

Language contact in Ancient Spain: direct and indirect evidence - Oliver Simkin

The rich epigraphic record of the Iberian peninsula provides evidence for a complex multilingual environment, where at least five indigenous languages were joined by three major colonial languages, each maintaining a permanent presence over several centuries. As a result, the study of language contact and multilingualism in the region has an illustrious history, and has been ahead of the game in the level of sophistication achieved. The subject which has received most attention is the linguistic consequences of Romanisation, which can be observed in great detail and reveals a remarkable degree of regional variation. However, the evidence for interaction between the indigenous languages is just as impressive. Iberian is especially important in this regard, since it stands out for the large geographical area over which it was used, the number of different languages with which it was in contact, and the complexity of its relationships with these other tongues. The fact that Iberian is an undeciphered language naturally has profound

consequences for the study of its language contacts; nevertheless, by using the cross-linguistic typology of multilingualism as a deductive instrument in our analysis, and by paying close attention to the indirect evidence, especially that provided by the most recent discoveries, it is possible to add to our understanding of the history of language contact in the peninsula and to gain a new perspective on some of the most fundamental questions in the field.

Complaints of the natives in a Greek dress: the evidence of the Zenon Archive for a Greek-Egyptian micro-community - Trevor Evans

This presentation will address the evidence of the third-century BC Zenon Archive for the bilingual Greek-Egyptian micro-community in the ancient Fayum. One of our largest and oldest papyrus archives from Graeco-Roman Egypt, this corpus contains approximately 1,831 texts (the current figure given by Dr Mark Depauw's *Trismegistos* website), or close to 40 per cent of all third-century Greek papyri. Nearly all of its texts are written in Greek, but there are some 24 documents partly or solely written in Egyptian (using the Demotic script). My focus is on the Greek texts, but in particular on a set of 163 documents which can be connected one way or another with indigenous Egyptian authors or scribes.

My central concern is the identification of bilingual interference from Egyptian in these Greek documents. Isolating genuine cases of interference is a challenging task, and I have been arguing in a series of recent presentations (at the XXVth International Congress of Papyrology in 2007 and at the Australasian Society for Classical Studies Conferences in 2008 and 2009) that in order to gain our best possible understanding of the material we urgently need a systematic analysis. In this paper I shall describe the progress and methodology of a Macquarie University project which attempts to satisfy that need, and I shall finish with a simple demonstration of some of its provisional indications. In the process I hope to provide a practical contribution toward two of the present Conference's major themes, the issues of the scope and limitations of our evidence and of diachronic continuity and change.

Stable and unstable bilingualism - James Clackson

Handbooks on bilingualism, sociolinguistics and language change often contain an implicit contrast between what I shall term 'stable' and 'unstable' bilingualism. Stable bilingualism refers to situations where speakers in a single community maintain two or more languages, sometimes restricted to different domains and associated with 'balanced bilingualism' which, as Romaine notes, is often equated with 'good bilingualism'. By unstable bilingualism I refer to contact situations that are short-lived and lead to language shift. According to the prevailing view, stable bilingualism occurs where the languages involved are, in Hock's words "more or less equal in strength, especially if they are more or less equal in prestige.'

In the countries around Mediterranean in the centuries before and after the expansion of Roman power, the use of the Latin and Greek languages provides a textbook example of stable bilingualism, and the contact situations between these two languages and local varieties seem to show unstable bilingualism. Eventually, nearly all vernacular languages (such as Etruscan, Oscan, Gaulish, Phrygian, Libyan etc.) were replaced by Latin or Greek. In Italy, through consideration of Etruscan and Latin grave inscriptions in Etruria, and the epigraphic record of Pompeii, it looks as if the shift from local language to Latin

was virtually complete by the age of Hadrian. However, in other parts of the Empire, we have scraps of evidence, some inscriptional, some textual, which imply that vernacular languages lasted much later, for example, Neo-Phrygian inscriptions of the third century AD and literary references to Phrygian (if we take them at face value) from the sixth. How are we to explain the survival of local languages for so long alongside the Latin and Greek? Was there ever a situation of stable bilingualism between Latin / Greek and the vernacular, and if so, what were the domains of the different languages?

Punic and Latin inscriptions in Roman North Africa: function and display - Andrew Wilson

This paper will examine the use and function of Punic inscriptions and Punic/Latin bilingual inscriptions in Roman North Africa, especially Lepcis Magna. It will consider how and why Punic was used as a language for monumental euergetism alongside Latin - both the public setting of the Punic texts, and the similarities and differences in phrasing between the two languages in bilingual texts such as the building inscription on the theatre of Lepcis Magna (AD 1-2), where very different formulae in the Latin and Punic versions of the text point up differences in epigraphic habit between Latin and Punic and are clearly designed to appeal to different readerships. Conversely, brickstamps of the early second century AD show idiomatic correspondences, where Punic stamps on locally produced bricks render the normal Latin epigraphic formulae on the imported bricks from the Tiber Valley used in the same projects. The paper will also track the persistence of Punic epigraphy on monumental buildings into the second century AD, and examine the changes in the contexts in which Punic texts appear.

Saturday 30th May 2009

Archaeology, papyrology, and the study of Greek-Coptic education in late antique Egypt – Scott Bucking

This paper sets the study of Greek-Coptic education in late antique Egypt against the backdrop of larger methodological questions concerning the relationship between the disciplines of archaeology and papyrology. To what extent does the identity of excavated texts as archaeological objects aid in understanding the nature of educational practices? What problems arise in attempting to use archaeological information to define the physical spaces for learning? In order to address these questions and to illustrate their relevancy to the study of bilingual education in Greek and Coptic, case studies will be developed from the author's ongoing field survey of alphabet-inscriptions.

Multilingualism and the Medieval Irish learned tradition - Pádraic Moran

The islands of Britain and Ireland in the early Middle Ages hosted a patchwork of linguistic communities with fluctuating borders. Irish, Brittonic (Welsh and related dialects), Anglo-Saxon, Pictish and Norse were spoken languages, and Latin was the common medium of a clerical élite. Moreover, some medieval scholars also took a serious interest the study of Greek and Hebrew, despite very limited textual resources and the apparent lack of access to native speakers. This paper will focus on the study of Greek in particular. Previous scholarship has cast the medieval Irish alternatively as masters of the language or hopeless dilettantes. The paper will present new evidence that provides a clearer picture

of the extent and the limitations of the resources available, and will consider how and why Greek was studied in the early medieval West.

Expressions of time in the Septuagint and the New Testament - Coulter George

Ancient Greek had several competing ways of expressing when an event happened: all three oblique cases as well as a host of prepositional constructions can be used to indicate when, for how long, or within what time frame a given event took place. But the standard accounts of these constructions fail to capture many of the conditions that trigger the use of one rather than another. This talk is part of an ongoing project aimed at determining more precisely what these conditions were, especially in classical Attic prose authors. To a large extent, the choice of construction is connected with the actionality of the verb modified by the construction, the pronominal and adjectival modifiers of the noun in the expression, as well as lexical quirks associated with individual nouns of time. The current talk, however, will cover the beginnings of the second major part of this project, namely the extension of the study to the Koine Greek of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Debate continues over the extent to which the Greek of the Septuagint and New Testament differs from earlier Attic because of diachronic development in the Greek language on the one hand, or interference from Semitic on the other. On the basis of the clearer understanding of the Attic constructions attained in the earlier stages of this project, this talk will examine which features of the distribution of temporal constructions in the Septuagint and New Testament—particularly those with “day” and “night”—can be explained by the same rules that work for Attic, and which features appear rather to have been affected by the syntax of Hebrew and Aramaic.

Typologies of translation techniques in situations of language contact - David Langslow

This paper will review and attempt to develop the typology of Greek terms in Latin texts that I used in my *Medical Latin in the Roman Empire* (Oxford 2000), chapter 2.

The typology as it stands served the particular purpose of characterising the use of Greek medical terms in four Latin medical texts in such a way that the texts might be compared and contrasted with one another quantitatively (and to some degree, and with due caution, qualitatively also). Thus, the aim had much in common with the questions asked of this conference-session concerning the description of the attested modes of translation and their status in the text and in the language at large, and the implications (of both modes and status) for the nature of the contact languages involved (at least with regard to the currency of expressions, the register(s) represented in the text, the sociolinguistic position of the author).

The intention here is to consider the possibility of extending the typology, and the actual and potential utility of this and other typologies, partly on the strength of the published work of others (including M. Dubuisson and B. Rochette on Latin in Polybius and later Greek writers), partly through firsthand study of other ancient texts both Greek and Latin, including other medical texts (notably the Latin version of Alexander of Tralles) but also going beyond these.

Linguistic manifestations of Greek-Armenian contact in Late Antiquity and Byzantium - Bert Vaux

Greek influence on the Armenian language is well-documented in the biblical translations of the 5th century and the works of the philhellenic school of Armenian philosophers and translators (5th-7th centuries). Greco-Armenian genetic resemblances predating the appearance of Armenian texts in the 5th century have been extensively investigated as well, notably in Clackson's *The Linguistic Relationship between Armenian and Greek* (1994). But what do we know about linguistic interactions between the Armenian and Greek cultures outside of this timeframe and beyond the pale of high literary culture? This talk surveys the diversity of Greco-Armenian language contact in Late Antiquity and Byzantium and traces its early Christian antecedents and post-Byzantine consequences in the Balkan Sprachbund. Materials to be exploited include early Christian loanwords, canonical and mirror-image Greek inscriptions in Armenia, Armenian inscriptions and manuscripts in Greek script, bilingual Byzantine seals and inscriptions, and Byzantine renditions of Armenian personal and place names.

***An habes linguam Latinam? Non tam bene sapio: a view from the early-medieval West* - Paul Russell**

This paper starts at the end: it intends to work back to the Roman Empire and is geographically situated on what were the fringes of that empire. It begins with Einhard's observations on Charlemagne's view of the relationship between Latin and the Germanic languages (which raises the issue of how speakers of the vernacular languages of the early-medieval west marked the status of their language vis-à-vis Latin) before moving north and west to consider some case studies from Britain from the same period. Much of the evidence arises in the context of non-native speakers (often speakers of one or more Celtic language) learning Latin in environments which were probably bilingual, if not multilingual; examples are considered, such as the text called *De raris fabulis* (preserved in Oxford, Bodley MS, 572), a colloquy text designed for teaching Latin by the direct method glossed in Old Welsh and Old Cornish, and the text of Juvencus, glossed in Old Welsh and Old Irish (preserved in Cambridge, UL MS, Ff. 4.42). The discussion will also move back in time to consider briefly the evidence of the insular inscriptions in western Britain, many of which contain inscriptions in Latin and Ogam, and the vexed issue of the relationship between British and Latin in late Roman Britain and sub-Roman Britain.

Cultures as languages and languages as cultures - Robin Osborne

To frame this summing-up session and pull together some of the themes from the conference, I will ask what larger framework can make sense of the various case-studies explored over the previous two days. As a way of enlarging the field of discussion I will look at the way in which a grave stele from third-century Athens combines bilingualism (inscriptions in both Greek and Phoenician) with a composite imagery which is neither obviously Greek nor obviously Phoenician. I will run cultural theorists' notions such as hybridity against linguists models such as code-switching to ask whether thinking of languages as culture or cultures as languages is helpful to our understanding either of the ancient world or of the contemporary world. I hope to draw attention to the difficulties of offering any framework for explanation which does not itself make and presuppose political choices, but also to the ways in which different disciplinary traditions (archaeology, linguistics) have embedded themselves in particular political models.