Literary Translingualism in the Greek and Roman Worlds

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Abstract

Our exploration of Greco-Roman literary translingualism covers an extensive geographical area and timeframe. After an introduction to the main issues, we cover three periods (Archaic and Classical Greece, the rise of Rome and the first centuries of the Roman Empire) and showcase selected translingual authors. The literary output of the Greco-Roman world is diverse, but despite the differences in cultural context, translingualism seems to be a feature, in various permutations, throughout much of its history. Translingualism in the early period is due to Greek "generic dialectalization," later it is a consequence of the expansion of the Roman world and its incorporation of communities of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

1. The Context for Greco-Roman Literary Translingualism

Literary translingualism refers to the practice of multilinguals writing in languages other than their mother tongue, and instead, for a variety of reasons, composing literature in their second or third languages.[i] Though earlier works treated the subject, the field was given coherence and impetus following the publication of Kellman's *The Translingual Imagination* (2000). The complexities of bilingualism and biculturalism in Greco-Roman literature have long been explored, but the translingual dimension, a specific and important aspect of the complexity, has not been discussed using this terminology and therefore not

linked to the field of literary translingualism. The Greco-Roman world offers numerous examples of translingual authors, some of whom discuss the phenomenon of writing in a non-native tongue and shed light on the evolving relationships between languages and cultural identities.

When we tackle the literature of the Greco-Roman world, we must remain alert to the nature of our evidence: Although we have some direct indications of how authors and readers contemplated literature and language, much has been lost. We have only what has been passed down to us, either by often complicated processes of manuscript transmission over centuries or through rarer finds of ancient texts in archaeological excavations.[ii] The materials that can be assembled and studied are therefore only a small part of the original literary environment and one that has been prone to the choices of medieval scribes and archaeologists' trowels. All interpretation is highly subjective, of course, but we should remember that our attempts to consider ancient literature in its context are hampered by multiple layers of subjective reconstruction of the past itself.

The writing of literary works in a language that was not the author's first was no doubt a common phenomenon across the Greco-Roman world, but our ability to identify the examples with confidence is restricted. Commonly, we know few biographical details of the early lives of ancient authors, making certainty about their native language elusive. Moreover, aspects of the linguistic context of the ancient world make matters complicated. One issue concerns what might count as translingualism in the Greek world, which is usually described as being composed of different dialects. Modern concepts of what constitutes a language, the shorthand of "Greek" used in classical studies and beyond, along with the popular, yet unattributed, quotation πᾶς μὴ Ἕλλην βάρβαρος "whoever is not

Greek is a barbarian" have created the illusion of uniformity in Greek languages and cultures. The real picture, however, is far more complex. One cannot talk about a single standardized ancient Greek, unified through a common system of education, codified grammar, and formal written forms. It is rather a vast repertoire consisting of a number of, sometimes very different, varieties, which showcase startling variation in orthography, lexemes, grammar, and pronunciation.

Questions that reasonably arise concern the perception that the Greeks themselves in Archaic and Classical times held about these variations. Did they acknowledge them? Did they consider them simple differentiations of the same mother tongue? Could they understand each other when they came into contact through trade, travel, migration, etc.? Initially, the words *dialektos* and *glossa* were not distinguished as in modern linguistics as "dialect" and "language" respectively. The word *glossa* could refer to a dialect or to a language, while the word *dialektos* only began to bear the meaning of dialect after the Hellenistic period. More specifically, Homer's Odysseus uses the word *glossa* to talk about the many dialects spoken on the island of Crete (*Od.* 19.175). Herodotus references a foreign language with the same linguistic term (1.57), and Thucydides mentions the Dorian dialect while using the term *glossa* (3.112). Similarly, the word *dialektos* was used with the meaning of language as articulate speech (Aristotle, *Problemata* 895a6) and written language (Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *On Literary Composition* 11). However, we also come across usages that prefigure the later meaning "dialect". Aristophanes uses the word with the meaning "speech" and "spoken language" (with the meaning "idiom") (*Fragments* 685), and Demosthenes the orator (4th century B.C.E.) uses the word to mean the "way of speaking", possibly referring to accent (37.55). Later on, Diogenes, the 2nd-century B.C.E.

Stoic, uses the word *dialektos* with the meaning of dialect (Diog.Bab.*Stoic*. 3.213). Dionysius of Halicarnassus (1st century B.C.E.) (*On literary composition* 3) and Plutarch (1st–2nd century C.E.) (*Alexander* 31) also employ the word with the meaning of dialect and local expression respectively.

So, although the word dialect comes from Greek, it is clear that the modern meaning should not be incautiously mapped onto the ancient and that when we talk about the Greek "dialects", these are in some cases significantly different linguistic varieties with socio-political associations that we might today recognize as separate "languages." Of course, the old chestnut in linguistics about what constitutes a language or a dialect could lead us into an endless debate: For our present purposes, in our view, the use by ancient Greeks of quite different linguistic varieties than their mother tongues to write in specific literary genres can be viewed as an example of literary translingual behavior (section **2**).

During Roman times, another issue concerns assigning "mother tongue" status in a context where bi- and multilingualism were the norm. Elite Romans were expected to have knowledge of both Latin and Greek language and culture, and there is evidence that most of them would have been exposed to, and taught both languages in early life (Tacitus, *A Dialogue on Oratory* 29). In a famous passage, the 1st-century C.E. Latin rhetorician Quintilian (1.12) argues that Roman boys should begin with instruction in Greek, since they will be immersed in Latin anyway, though the study of Latin should not be started much later. In the Roman elite context, then, "mother tongue" status could be assigned to both Latin *and* Greek.

Similarly, one might assume that writers of Latin texts from the western Roman provinces, particularly ones newly incorporated, had local languages (Gaulish, Celtiberian,

Iberian, Lusitanian *inter alia*) as their L1, but their position as elite provincials often living in well-connected urban centers may mean that in many cases Latin was already one of their primary languages, if not necessarily the only one, even only a couple of generations after conquest.[iii] This is particularly likely in provinces that seem to have undergone relatively early, and apparently rapid, Latinization (for example southern Gaul, incorporated from the 2nd century B.C.E. and parts of the Iberian peninsula incorporated from the 3rd century B.C.E.). Lucan, Martial, and Seneca, for example, all originally from Hispania, probably knew Latin from birth. Ausonius, the 4th-century C.E. writer from Bordeaux famous for his pride in his provincial origins, almost certainly did not speak the Celtic language Gaulish (a language barely spoken in cities in the later Roman Empire), and his pride was rooted in a provincial Latinity.[iv] However, Ausonius perhaps *did* produce a translingual output, though not a Gaulish–Latin one, since he composed poems entirely in Greek and created texts which alternated from Latin to Greek between lines, even mid-word.[v] Since he says that he struggled to learn Greek as a boy (*Professores* 8.13–16), we might assume that Greek was for him a second language.

In the eastern Roman provinces, literary translingualism was arguably likely to have been more familiar. Alexander the Great's Empire made the use of Greek as a lingua franca widespread in the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East (section **2**), a situation which was continued by the ever-pragmatic and bilingual Roman elite, creating (crudely speaking) a situation where Latin was very occasionally used as a "Super-High" language, Greek as High and the assorted local languages as Low, with some exceptions (Adams 2003a). Interestingly, under the Roman Empire, a few local languages were revived or appeared for the first time in writing, such as Syriac, a high-register form of Aramaic, from

the 1st century C.E. onwards, which was used from the 3rd century to create literary texts, including translations of the Bible (King 2018). In Egypt, from where the bulk of our Greek papyri hail, Egyptian was not entirely overshadowed, and Demotic literature was still written during the Greco-Roman epoch—a language that developed after 300 C.E. into what we know as Coptic and which was used to create an extensive Christian literature (Boud'hors 2012). Many eastern Roman provincials who wrote in Latin and some who wrote in Greek were producing a translingual output. Consider, for example, the Greek works of the Syrian Lucian (section **4**) and of Josephus, from Roman Judea, who notes at the end of his Greek-language *Antiquities of the Jews* his difficulty in mastering Greek as L2, and admits that he speaks it with an accent (*AJ* 20.11.2).

The Greco-Roman world covered a vast time and space and produced a varied and influential literature. We have been selective in choosing authors to illustrate the phenomenon of literary translingualism, and naturally these choices have been reached through our own research biases and experience. We begin with the early Greek literary world where different linguistic varieties were employed dependent on the generic form, so, for example, a writer whose native tongue was Doric Greek would use Ionic Greek to write elegy (section **2**). The next section (**3**), on *The rise of Rome*, moves the geographical center of gravity to Italy and explores the way in which, as Rome expands, the roles of Latin and Greek are constantly negotiated. The relationships between the Romans and the Greek language(s) and the Greeks themselves are the most obsessively discussed in our ancient sources, although other languages and peoples come into the Roman ambit as Rome expands within and beyond Italy. Finally, we turn to the first two centuries of Empire (section **4**), when the Roman world continues to incorporate numerous provinces with a

range of different mother tongues that form part of a linguistic environment with two languages of power: Latin and Greek.

2. The Greek Literary World: Dialectal Heterogeneity and “Barbarian” Tongues

We begin our journey into literary translingualism in Archaic and Classical Greece, for which ancient commentators describe a Greek “language” with a large number of so-called “dialects” spoken throughout Greece as well as in Greek colonies in Sicily, Italy, and across the Mediterranean. In the early 5th century B.C.E., a number of supra-regional dialects can be identified that span different regions, as well as epichoric dialects with their own distinct characteristics that belong in one of the mother dialects. The main dialectal families according to modern dialectologists were Attic-Ionic, split into Western, Eastern, and Central Ionic, and Attic; Arcado-Cypriot; Doric, which comprised North-West Greek and Peloponnesian Doric; and Aeolian, with speakers from Thessalia, Boeotia, and the northern Aegean coast of Asia Minor.[vi] The connections between these dialects were multiple and spanned the morphological, syntactical, and phonological. They can be explained through a geographical and historical perspective—each dialect appearing and evolving at a certain period in time and in specific geographic regions—but also as products of convergences, borrowings, population movement, parallel developments, and inheritance from parent dialects.[vii] These linguistic modulations must be understood against the backdrop of the non-unified political divisions of Greek territory and the colonies. In the archaic and classical Greek world, each city-state had its own political, administrative, and religious system, and there was no single linking linguistic variety.

In literature, the linguistic atlas is complex. There are cases when speakers from different areas are represented as speaking their own respective dialects. In Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (people from Acharnai, a region in Attica), market traders speak their own dialect. In the same author's *Lysistrata*, Spartan envoys also preserve their idiom.[viii] However, this linguistic medley is not represented in other literary genres, where we find a striking uniformity of dialect in direct speech even if speakers are from other dialectal regions. This linguistic uniformity cannot reflect the spoken realities, and the contexts are too varied to assume the mediation of interpreters, for example. Perhaps the choice to present a flattened dialectal picture might be interpreted as the simplest way to communicate to the widest audience, but whether this might reflect an ability to understand dialectal variation amongst the audience (they can fill that linguistic quality in themselves) or not (they would not have been able to understand it) is hard to tell. In support of the latter, we could cite Thucydides' comment about the Eurytanians, "who form the largest tribe of the Aetolians, and are (they say) the most unintelligible in language and eaters of raw-flesh" (3.94) or the conversation reported by Plato: "'Well, Socrates', he said, 'what else do you think Simonides meant? Was he not reproaching Pittacus for not knowing how to distinguish words correctly, Lesbian as he was, and nurtured in a foreign dialect?'" (*Protagoras* 341c). Evidence to support the former assumption could be Socrates' plea in the *Apology* (Pl. *Apol.* 17d–18a) to be treated as a foreigner speaking his own dialect, an indication of local vernaculars being used and understood outside their territories. Despite the acknowledged differences of the Greek "dialects", there seems to be a general understanding of their cultural relatedness as "Greek", as becomes evident in Herodotus (8.144.2) where the Athenians and the Spartans admit to their shared blood, language, and

culture—a bond that sets them against the barbarian "other".[ix] In contrast, generally speaking, Greeks seem impressively disinterested in the languages of non-Greeks (Bers 1997).

Recurring ancient literary translingualism occurs in Greek literature when the Greek dialect chosen follows a standard conditioned by each literary genre, rather than the native dialect of the author. Each genre has a "native" dialect in which it is written, and which is preserved by authors irrespective of their own provenance. Starting with Homeric epic, the language is a mixture of Ionic and Aeolic elements as well as archaisms that cannot be traced to any dialect spoken at the time (Horrocks 1980, 1987, 2010, Palmer 1962). Ionian elegy, another type of archaic poetry, originates in Ionic-speaking territories. Major representatives of the genre include figures from Ionic-speaking areas, such as 7th- and 6th-century Archilochus, Mimnermus, and Hipponax, but also poets from areas with different dialects, such as Theognis, Tyrtaeus, and Solon (Kaczko 2008, West 1974), and the surviving poems feature occasional vernacular elements from each poet's area. By contrast, choral lyric is born and developed in Doric-speaking areas. Initially, practitioners of the genre also work in Doric-speaking areas, such as 7th-century Alcman (Cassio 2007) who wrote in Sparta albeit from Sardis in Lydia. Later on, the genre becomes more internationalized as poets from south Italy, Ceos, and Boetia—Ibycus, Simonides, and Pindar respectively—embrace choral poetry and a literary Doric dialect takes shape. Finally, from the late 7th to the 5th century, the Ionic dialect finds itself as the "official" language of pre-Socratic philosophers and historians (Vessella 2008).

By the 5th century B.C.E., the political landscape had shifted in favor of Athens. After the end of the Persian wars, Athens assumed the leading role of organizing the Greeks

and protecting Greek culture as a collective identity against the perceived barbarian otherness of the Persians. Subsequently, Athens became the cradle of political and cultural activity in the Greek world, with authors, orators, poets, and other prestigious figures, of a range of different mother tongues, flocking to its soil to write, perform, and contribute to Athenian intellectual preeminence, bringing the Attic dialect to the forefront. However, the situation is never simple. Athenian drama is a unique case of amalgamation within the genre itself, with the main dialogue in Attic but with the choral sections sung by the chorus in Doric, the descendant of choral lyric. The dialogues, though, are composed in literary Attic, which does not necessarily reflect any spoken vernacular. This literary Attic is an amalgamation of Ionic and a higher register of Attic that does not resemble the spoken Attic of the period. Thucydides writes the *History of the Peloponnesian War* in a type of Attic that favors Ionic elements rather than local Attic idioms, showcasing a more internationalized take on dialectic confluences, while Lysias the orator, who wrote speeches on behalf of middle-class Athenians, prefers to remain closer to spoken Attic. By the time Plato writes his dialogues, his didactic passages resemble the language of Attic drama, his dialogic parts are close to the educated spoken Attic of his times, and overall it is evident that literary Attic is severing its initial Ionic ties (even though by then Ionic elements were permanently adopted into Attic). Attic acquires a new unrivaled status amongst the other Greek dialects that mirrors and is mirrored in the equally unique position of Athenian prestige in the Greek political, cultural, and literary world (Dover 1997, Vessella 2008).

Eventually, Great Attic, an Ionic-influenced, simplified version of classical Attic, became the backbone of the Koine, which was adopted by Macedonian rulers and spread

across the new Greek territories.[x] Koine became the official form of language for administration, commerce, and literature at the expense of local dialects of Greek city-states (Bubeník 1989). Koine was used for technical writings, such as Euclid's mathematical texts and texts that were not meant as high literary prose, such as the New Testament. Local Greek dialects and local languages (for example Egyptian, Phrygian, and Pisidian, and their associated contact-induced Greek varieties)[xi] continued to be used especially in oral communications so many authors of the Koine wrote translingually. As often happens with vernacular languages, Koine lost its prestige starting as early as the end of the 3rd century B.C.E., and authors sought to write in higher register Attic that resembled the Attic of classical orators, Plato, and Thucydides. This tendency culminated during the so-called Second Sophistic (1st–3rd century C.E.), a literary and cultural movement that took hold under the Roman Empire (section **4**). Authors strove to imitate "pure" Attic that seemed to guarantee Greekness. Of course, even in this case, pure Attic could not be easily standardized, as the language was now used by non-native Greek speakers who had to decide about the level of conservativism they would adhere to, which of the classical Attic authors to imitate, and whether new forms of Attic are adulterated or simply indications of linguistic evolution (Swain 1996, Whitmarsh 2001).

3. The Rise of Rome: Negotiating Roles for Latin and Greek

Against this backdrop of extensive genre-based translingual literary output from the Archaic and Classical Greek world, a settlement was growing in power in the Italian peninsula (Lomas 2018, Terrenato 2019). It is easy to forget, given the later creation of a vast Empire, that it was by no means assured that Rome would take the lead even within

the Italian peninsula itself. It was just one grouping amongst several with different languages and cultural backgrounds, some relatively similar linguistically, such as Faliscan, Oscan, and Umbrian, others divergent, for example, Etruscan (Clackson and Horrocks 2007 37–76). The Etruscans, indeed, who were involved in trade across the Mediterranean from an early period and who adopted literacy earlier than Latin speakers, might even be seen as a more likely candidate for empire-building than the Romans.

Within the Italian peninsula itself Greek language and culture had a strong foothold in the area known as Magna Graecia, essentially the coastal parts of the boot of Italy and Sicily (Leiwo 1994, Lomas 1993, Tagliapietra 2018, Tribulato 2012, Willi 2008). It is likely that the earliest known named author writing in Latin, the 3rd-century B.C.E. Livius Andronicus, may have come from this part of Italy (Tarentum). He may well have had Greek as his first language and is famous for having translated the *Odyssey* into Latin and its “native” Saturnian metre.[xii] Sadly, we only have snippets of this early translingual output cited by later authors. The 2nd-century C.E. Roman biographer, Suetonius, described Livius Andronicus, and the early Latin author Ennius (c. 239–169 B.C.E.), from Rudiae in the heel of Italy, as *semigraeci* “half-Greek”, referring to the nature of their teaching and outputs. Ennius, who wrote, amongst other things, an epic version of Roman history (again only transmitted in fragments), was another pioneer of Latin literature (Damon and Farrell 2020, Skutsch 1985). Aulus Gellius reports several centuries later that Ennius said he had *tria cordia* “three hearts”, explaining that this was because he spoke Greek, Oscan, and Latin. As Wallace-Hadrill (2008 3–4) points out: Greek was because Rudiae was in Magna Graecia, which the Romans regarded as a Greek-speaking territory; Oscan because Rudiae was in origin a settlement of the Messapi (and their language was different from Oscan but

perhaps centuries later Oscan is standing in for Messapic as a generic non-Latin/Greek language of Italy, or he was actually from an Oscan-speaking family who had moved south); and Latin because by Ennius' birth in 239 B.C.E. Rudiae had been under Roman control for two generations. In Ennius' case, Latin may well have been a learned language and the earliest epic history in Latin may be a translingual output. Terence was probably also a translingual author, writing Roman comedies in the 2nd century B.C.E. inspired directly from Greek examples and trying to create a "more restrained and formally consistent style" (Clackson and Horrocks 2007 177) than his predecessor Plautus, deliberately imitating Menander's Attic Greek (Karakasis 2005). Terence was probably originally from north Africa and Latin may have been his L2 or even L3, but his Latinity was deemed a model long after the Roman Empire fell.

By the end of the Republic and the early years of the imperial period, the people of Latium formed a powerful and growing force on the Mediterranean stage, their empire-building extending to the Iberian peninsula in the west, Egypt to the south, Syria to the east and the Low Countries to the north. Despite the contact with a large number of local languages, and a famous Plinian statement on Rome's "civilizing mission" that includes drawing together "jarring and uncouth tongues into unity of language" (Pliny the Elder, *Natural History* 3.39), the commentary in our literary sources is almost entirely focused on what was seen as the key linguistic issue: the relationship between Latin and Greek. The "non-classical" languages were ignored. Elite Romans wrestled with the relative positions of what they saw as both their languages and literary cultures. They deeply respected Greek language and culture as the model and, in some senses, superior to their own (*Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit et artis intulit agresti Latio* "Conquered Greece captured its

savage victor and introduced the arts to rustic Latium." Horace, *Epistles* II.155), but they also considered Greek culture "effeminate" and "decadent" and themselves as superior through conquest. The linguistic politics in this period must be seen in the context of this ever-evolving relationship,[xiii] as Romans attempt to claw their way to cultural dominance, through imitating, flattering, outdoing, and criticizing.

Greek is permitted to continue (following Alexander's conquests) as the lingua franca of the eastern Empire and as a language of culture everywhere, and all elite Romans must know it intimately, but they must simultaneously be cautious of seeming "too Greek". An illustrative passage occurs in Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars*,[xiv] where the emperor Tiberius (14–37 C.E.), a fluent Greek speaker, is characterized as so cautious in his use of Greek in that most Roman of places, the Senate, that he even apologizes for having to use a Greek word which was already an integrated borrowing (*monopolium*) (*Tiberius* 71). Another anecdote, related by Suetonius, describes a more serious incident, in which a Greek-speaking Roman citizen is stripped of his citizenship by the emperor Claudius for not knowing Latin (*Claudius* 16.2),[xv] but this is given in the context of Claudius' inconsistent and unreasonable behavior and cannot have been a common occurrence (numerous Roman citizens in the Greek East will not have known Latin well, or even at all). Claudius is described later by Suetonius as skilled in Greek and of the view that Greek and Latin counted as "both our languages", and he is even supposed to have written histories of the Etruscans and Carthaginians in Greek (*Claudius* 42).[xvi]

Indeed, the examples of linguistic purism must be understood against a backdrop of the common use of both languages, which is constantly negotiated depending on the topic, addressee, political context, and so on. The use of Greek in the large Roman

epistolary output is particularly illustrative of this: Cicero laces his Latin with code-switches into Greek, at least in permitted contexts. Some switches make it clear that parallel bilingual processing is occurring for the letter writers and readers and several of the numerous switches involving literary quotations also require knowledge of the context of the original Greek text to understand the implicature (the quotation may even be partial and requires the reader to complete it to understand fully the point).[xvii]

Assessment of the Greek language in Cicero's correspondence has demonstrated that it is varied (O'Sullivan 2017).[xviii] It seems to be more classical (i.e. more Attic) than we might perhaps have expected from an author who conversed in contemporary spoken Greek. But it also includes words not otherwise attested in Greek or Latin sources (for example ἀλογευόμενος at *Ad Atticum* VI.4.3) and ranges over different dialects and periods of the language to achieve specific goals, such as obfuscation, parading of knowledge, and characterizations of individuals. Cicero predominately wrote in Latin and though he will have learnt Greek from a very young age, we might consider his Greek writing "translingual". In the three passages of extended Greek transmitted to us (VI.4, VI.5, IX.4), Cicero deliberately chooses words and uses old-fashioned features such as tmesis (separation of prefix and verb) and verbal adjectives to make the letters "opaque for the average reader of the Koine", in order to achieve his stated aim of obfuscation (VI.4.3 and VI.7.1).[xix]

Whilst on the whole Cicero can be seen to be basing his own Greek on classical rather than contemporary norms, O'Sullivan argues that "this choice was by no means universal amongst his Roman peers",[xx] giving examples of contemporary Greek which can be associated with Atticus and Antony. He goes on to remark that

> "Cicero's own use of Greek is in fact suggestive of that return to Classical Greek which we know as Atticism, and which first emerges into the historical record in the Roman orator's own lifetime, and, moreover, in Rome itself ... Atticism was not the invention of Greeks, but of Romans who, as outsiders, could see the difference between the evidently decayed Greek language around them and that of the Classical form which they studied so avidly."[xxi]

The literary translingualism of elite Roman epistolographers is skilled and multifunctional: Cicero, and others, do not simply write in Greek, they manipulate the dialectal forms available to them for a wide variety of functions, including to obfuscate, to evoke specific contexts, to be creative, to characterize individuals, to reflect the realities of written and oral bilingual interaction amongst peers and to stake a claim to, and help to create, cultural movements (for Atticism see also sections **2** and **4**).

4. The Roman Empire: *e pluribus duo*

As the Empire ages, linguistic relations and ideologies continue to develop. In most areas, this entails the on-going marginalization of local languages, and the embedding of a two-language set-up, with Latin running the West and Greek the East. Arguably there is now more confidence amongst the Roman elite to allow a domain-based carving-up of their two languages in literary and other contexts (Greek, for example, tends to corner rhetoric, grammar, medicine, and philosophy). They appear less obsessed by the perceived "poverty" of their language and the awkwardness of the cultural superiority of the classical (*not* contemporary) Greeks which preoccupied earlier authors.[xxii] Rome has become a superpower, and Romans express confidence that Latin can, and should, reflect this. As

part of being culturally Roman, they still need to know Greek language and literature intimately, of course, but this is a culture that they now own and control.

If we take the evidence of the 2nd-century C.E. correspondence between Marcus Aurelius and his older teacher, and possible lover, Fronto, from Cirta (modern-day Constantine, Algeria), we might consider that Romanness, for at least some Antonine elites, entails knowledge of the separate entities Attic Greek and a perfect Latin, i.e. *lingua Romana*.[xxiii] This may signal a significant development if we consider that in the Late Republic and Early Empire Romanness of language involves what might be conceived as the duality of a single mixed entity combining both Latin and Greek. This is a crude generalization, of course, as different perspectives on language and culture remained live, making the use of Greek and Latin in literary texts a versatile agent, but one which helps our contextualization as we probe the complexities.

Fronto is a "linguistic nationalist"[xxiv] so renowned for his purity of language amongst contemporaries that Aulus Gellius deploys him as his champion guardian of the Latin language.[xxv] On the surface, it seems therefore that Fronto's practice in his epistolography, which includes writing Greek letters and code-switching into Greek in his Latin, might show misalignment from his mission.[xxvi] Indeed, Marcus expresses surprise that Fronto has deemed something he has written in Greek to be one of his best compositions and remembers that he has recently been admonished by Fronto for such a dangerous practice. This attitude—that using Greek can represent a *periculum* "danger"—might support Adams' view that "it would have been an extreme act for two educated Romans to communicate purely in Greek to express their joint possession of the trappings of that culture".[xxvii] But just as Marcus teases Fronto by saying he has not learnt Greek,

since he had lessons from the best Greek teachers and he writes extensively in Greek, for example his *Meditations* written in Koine Greek, we need to be cautious about what Fronto and friends say about their linguistic practice and assess both the theory and the practice carefully in their immediate and broader Roman context.

A key passage for understanding Fronto's views on language, identity, and culture comes when he writes a letter in Greek destined for Marcus' mother, Domitia Lucilla. Instead of sending it directly to the notionally 'intended' recipient, Fronto sends it via Marcus noting that he would appreciate it if Marcus would check his Greek first so that he might avoid embarrassing mistakes.

> I've daringly written a letter to your mother in Greek which I have included in the letter which I have written to you. Read it first and, since you've studied Greek more recently than I have, if you find any howlers in it, correct them and then pass it on to your mother. I do not want your mother despising me as an *Opicus*. (van den Hout 1988 (VdH) 21.12–16, translation Mullen)

We must not take this comment at face value: Fronto's Greek is excellent. Rather this is a strategy. First, writing in Greek and asking for it to be checked by his student flatters both Domitia Lucilla, who had been working on her philhellenism, and the middleman, who has been raised to a position of superior linguistic authority. Second, presumably Domitia Lucilla will not be alerted to the mistakes, so Fronto creates further intimacies between his student and himself for which even the mother–son relationship is no match. Third, it allows Fronto to set out his ethnolinguistic position. He is a leading Latinist of his day and by making such a fuss about his Greek, getting it checked by Marcus, and disingenuously worrying in the letter to Domitia itself that it might be full of mistakes, barbarisms, and not

Attic enough, he flags up that he is *not* Greek (VdH 24.1–3). In highlighting the risks of barbarous language and evoking the image of the *Opicus*,[xxviii] he opens the way for comments on his own background as "a Libyan of the Libyan nomads" (VdH 24.9).[xxix] By focusing the attention on his being a native of a land far from Rome, his linguistic skills in writing faultless non-native Attic Greek, whilst being a preeminent Latinist, might seem even more impressive. Fronto is making a display of his vision of Romanness, namely having native elegant Latin, *lingua Romana*, and learned Attic Greek no matter where in the Empire you were born.

Also, from modern-day Algeria, Apuleius (c. 120–170 C.E.) surfaces as a figure of bilingual eloquence who uses his knowledge of Greek to transform literature. We can presume that he was trilingual—Punic being his native language and Greek and Latin acquired.[xxx] As a matter of fact, in the introduction of his novel *Metamorphoses*, speaking through the main character Lucius, Apuleius describes stays in Greece and then Rome to learn the languages—a task that, as he says, was completed with considerable difficulty (*Met*. 1.1).[xxxi] In north Africa, the educated elite consisted mainly of Latinists. It was especially with Emperor Marcus Aurelius (161–180 C.E.) that Greek was promoted (MacMullen 1966 12–13). Apuleius' facility with Greek earlier in the Roman period of the city is therefore perhaps relatively exceptional (Horsfall 1979 79–95, Kotula 1969 386–92). At some point in his life, he married a wealthy widow and was consequently accused of performing magic to gain her attention. In a very Platonic manner, which demonstrates his mastery of languages and cultures—both literary and social—he authored his *Apology* to defend himself. Other works include *Florida*, an anthology of information pieces much

like modern-day encyclopedic articles (Todd Lee 2005), *On the God of Socrates*, and *On the Universe*.[xxxii]

His works are written in Latin, and he references repeatedly his knowledge of Greek. Apuleius re-envisions Roman literature by taking Greek literary works and adapting them to the Latin language and Roman culture (Sandy 1997 9–16). In the *Apology*, he says that he is known for being knowledgeable in both languages (1.4) (Bradley 2012 3–22) and pokes fun at his accuser for being unable to read Greek (*Apol*. 30.11). He makes a similar remark in *Florida*, where he also says that his audience is accustomed to his bilingual speeches (18.15). Obviously, these language switches could indicate that Apuleius expected his audience to be familiar with Greek, too, or he is simply boasting about his facility with languages. Throughout the *Apology*, he quotes Homer (*Apol*. 22.5) and Plato (*Apol.* 25.10–11) and references Aristotle (*Apol.* 36.3–8). He also delves into the process of linguistic and cultural translation and discusses the difficulty of finding Latin words for certain Greek terms (38.5). Similarly, in his treatise *On Plato*, he asks for his readers' favorable reception and understanding, as he had to find neologisms for the obscure Platonic topics he is discussing (1.9). In *Florida*, he says that he will sing a hymn in both Latin and Greek and will also preface it with a dialogue in both languages (18.38–43).

Apuleius' ingenuity, though, transcends the traditional boundaries: he is a translingual Punic author who does far more than translate Greek texts into Latin. He creates a new literature which effectuates transculturalism.[xxxiii] It is widely accepted that his *Metamorphoses* did have a Greek original that sadly does not survive (Mason et al. 1978 1). Apuleius at the beginning of his work admits to adapting the Greek original, not simply translating or switching between languages, but actually writing a Latin version of

the Greek archetype.[xxxiv] Additionally, there are some Punic nuances such as the Punic pronunciation of Latin words, even though not enough to suggest that Apuleius is brandishing his Carthaginian roots.[xxxv] Furthermore, his *On the Universe* is 862-lines long of which only 600 correspond to the Greek pseudo-Aristotelian namesake. The rest consists of Apuleius' own adaptations and accretions, along with other more minute adaptations of Greek customs and concepts with the Roman equivalents (35.366–368) (Müller 1939 133). More specifically, he substitutes Homer with Vergil, once again modulating a particular work to fit another culture always against the backdrop of the original (36.369).

Another unique case of linguistic permutation finds itself in Lucian, born around 125 C.E. in Samosata, the capital of the Kingdom of Commagene that became part of the Roman province of Syria. He self-identifies as (As)Syrian, and his native language was probably Syriac. Lucian, though, climbs the ranks of Roman administration as a naturalized Roman citizen and writes in Greek while migrating between languages and cultures showcasing a magnificent command of both Greek and Latin. Lucian belongs in the wave of the Second Sophistic, a literary and socio-cultural phenomenon of the time, that boasts a return to the classical models of Greek literature and a revival of Hellenism and Atticism in all its forms (Bozia 2015, Jones 1986, Swain 1996 17–64, Whitmarsh 2001 248–294) (section **2**). In the context of a sprawling Empire of significant diversity, Lucian represents a slew of individuals who write in Greek as non-native speakers.

Grammarians and theoreticians in this period comment on, chastise, and correct non-native users of Greek and particularly Attic. So, apparently "monolingual" Greek writings, such as those by non-native speaker Lucian, become scrutinized by "guardians of the language" as objects of study of, what we now might call, literary translingualism.

Moeris, the 2nd-century lexicographer, distinguishes between primary and secondary Attics (194.29, 197.28, 208.15), thus creating a barrier between the original Attic natives and the new speakers of the so-called revived Attic.[xxxvi] Similarly, Phrynichus, another contemporary lexicographer, among his lemmas and accompanying comments creates yet another category of speakers, the fake Atticizers (54).[xxxvii] There is no indication as to whether this refers exclusively to non-native speakers, even though Favorinus, a trilingual Roman sophist from Gaul, is mentioned on several occasions for his linguistic infelicities (Bozia 2018).

Against this backdrop, Lucian puts his non-native eloquence to the foreground and subverts the notion of native infallibility, all the while pronouncing his natural ability to switch seamlessly between languages and cultures. In *A Slip of the Tongue in Greeting*, he seemingly self-flagellates for using the wrong greeting on account of the time (*Laps*. 1). He admits to his foreign provenance while showcasing a masterful familiarity with both Greek and Roman customs and languages (*Laps*. 13, 16–19). In *The False Critic*, Lucian attacks his addressee for accusing him of a linguistic barbarism (*Pseudol*. 1) and presents the history of the word and its socio-cultural nuances, thus bridging the supposed chasm between native and non-native speakers of Greek (*Pseudol*. 11–12). In *Zeuxis*, he suggests a resurgence of Attic Greek, not as a replica of the original 5th- and 4th-century B.C.E. Attic, but as a newly fashioned form that mirrors the diversity of its speakers. Finally, in *The Solecist*, he produces a minute diatribe of the Attic dialect where he lists a number of mistakes to which new speakers of Attic are prone, while simultaneously providing the correct models. This particular work could be read as Lucian's manifesto for a less rigid consideration of language, as he—a non-native speaker of Greek—clearly puts his fluency

on full display.[xxxviii] As part of this ongoing debate on forms of language, Sextus Empiricus, a 2nd-/3rd-century CE philosopher, in *Against the Grammarians* discusses the two types of Hellenism—the grammatically approved forms and the common usage ones. He proceeds to favor the latter, appreciating language as a living organism that transforms and modulates, creating new spaces for non-native speakers (1.240).

During the imperial period, the educated elite made the case for linguistic translatability that also extended to cultural permeability. The surviving texts suggest that translingualism in the Roman Empire created a space that could accommodate fluent non-native speakers, who could be open about their foreignness. Ultimately, this era showcases the dominance of two languages at the expense of the many (*e pluribus duo*), but also the ways in which multiple cultures found expression through the practices of Greco-Roman translingualism.

5. Conclusion

In our exploration of Greco-Roman literary translingualism, we have covered a large geographical area and a lengthy timeframe. The output of the Greco-Roman literary world from Homer to Apuleius is diverse, but, despite the differences in cultural context, translingualism seems to be a feature in various permutations throughout much of its history. Greek literature is marked in its first few centuries by translingualism caused by what might be called "generic dialectalization," whereby Greek speakers write in a Greek "dialect" in some cases quite different from their native Greek tongue. In the Roman context literary translingualism is of two main types: the Latin–Greek translingualism of elite Romans such as Cicero and Fronto for whom one of the languages can be classed

"dominant", and translingualism involving the writing of Latin/Greek by authors whose L1 was a local language such as Syriac, Punic, and Oscan, a feature of some early Latin authors and, later, provincials particularly from north Africa and the eastern Empire.

We have seen that Greco-Roman translingual writing is used to serve a range of functions: to fit the generic norms, to evoke specific contexts, to characterize individuals, to reflect the realities of written and oral bilingual interaction amongst peers, to carve out ethnolinguistic identities and to stake a claim to, and to help to create cultural movements, such as the Second Sophistic. Modern commentators on Greco-Roman literature have long been cognizant of the linguistic and cultural interactions at stake when authors write in languages other than their mother tongues, but have not, until now, addressed them specifically in terms of *literary translingualism.* It is hoped that this is not simply a case of adding new terminology, but that by focusing on this specific practice, we can learn from, make comparisons with, and work on literary translingualism in other cultural contexts.

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[i] *Translingualism* is also used as a term in modern sociolinguistics, where it is linked to *translanguaging*. Mullen (e.g. 2020) has used it with this sociolinguistic meaning, what we might call *linguistic translingualism*, in the context of epigraphic materials from the ancient world which show flexibility of linguistic resources. Work on linguistic translingualism reminds us that we should not always assume that groups think in terms of the bounded entities we know as Standard Languages.
[ii] For the shape of the cannon and what has been lost, see Netz 2020.
[iii] For local languages in the Roman provinces, see Adams 2003a, Adams, Janse, Swain 2002, Bagnall 2011, Biville et al. 2008, Cotton et al. 2009, Millar 1968, Mullen 2013, Mullen and James 2012, Neumann and Untermann 1980, Papaconstantinou 2010, Ruiz Darasse and Luján 2011.
[iv] For Gaulish see Lambert 2018, Mullen and Ruiz Darasse 2018, 2020. For Ausonius, see Sivan 1993.
[v] For Ausonius' knowledge of Greek, see John 2021.
[vi] There is no little debate about the dialectal classifications. The scheme set out in Buck 1955 is still a reliable guide, for subsequent work, see Christidis 2007 part III, Coleman 1963, Colvin 2010, Crespo et al. 1993, Finkelberg 1994, Horrocks 2010 9–66.
[vii] See Finkelberg 1994 and Morpurgo Davies 1987.
[viii] For a detailed discussion of Old Comedy and linguistic practices, see Bers 1997, Colvin 1999, Willi 2003.
[ix] For the dichotomy of Greeks and barbarians, see, for example, Strabo 1.4.9, Thuc. 1.3.3, Xen. *Hell.* V.1.17.
[x] The term Great Attic is coined by Thumb 1901, 1906.
[xi] For Egyptian Greek, see Gignac 1976, 1981, Mayser 1970; for Anatolian Greek see Brixhe 1987.
[xii] For Saturnian metre, see Kruschwitz 2002, Parsons 1999.
[xiii] For Roman linguistic politics, see Dubuisson 1982, Kaimio 1979, Rochette 1997, 2010.
[xiv] For Suetonius, see Power and Gibson 2014 and Wallace-Hadrill 1983.
[xv] It is unclear whether the episode described by Cassius Dio (60.17.4) where a Lycian envoy has his Roman citizenship removed by Claudius due to linguistic incompetence is the same as that related by Suetonius.
[xvi] For further discussion of the linguistic practices of the Julio-Claudian Emperors, see Elder and Mullen 2019, chapter 5.
[xvii] For a recent account of Greek code-switching in Cicero and other Roman epistolographers, see Elder and Mullen 2019 and https://csrl.classics.cam.ac.uk/. For earlier work on Ciceronian code-switching, see Adams 2003a 308–47 and Swain 2002.
[xviii] Cicero produced a voluminous correspondence which circulated in Antiquity and of which we now have preserved large collections to Atticus and *Ad familiares* (friends, colleagues and family members) and smaller collections to Brutus and his brother Quintus. Cicero's letters are erudite and polished, and are usually counted as "literary". See Elder and Mullen 2019 chapter 3 for references to the collections and scholarly literature.
[xix] O'Sullivan 2017 98.
[xx] O'Sullivan 2017 99.
[xxi] O'Sullivan 2017 99.
[xxii] See Swain 2004 for discussion of the evolving relationship between Romans and Greek culture; see Goldhill 2001, Swain 1996, Whitmarsh 2001, Whitmarsh and Thomson 2013 for further discussions of the dynamic literary and cultural context.
[xxiii] For this usage, see also Pliny, *Ep.* 2.10.2, and for further references, Adams 2003b 194–197. Flobert 1988 argues for a strong link between the use of the term *lingua Romana* and imperial domination.
[xxiv] Swain 2004 17.
[xxv] Gellius refers to Fronto's *sermo purus* at 19.8.1. For Gellius, see Holford-Strevens 2003.
[xxvi] For code-switching in Fronto's correspondence, see Elder and Mullen 2019 175–219, Swain 2004, Valette 2014, Wenskus 2003. At Elder and Mullen 2019 211 it is implied that Wenskus suggests Fronto's praise of Marcus' code-switching is not genuine: in fact, Wenskus states that though code-switching into Greek is presented as a potential risk, Fronto thinks Marcus performs like a virtuoso.
[xxvii] Adams 2003a 301.
[xxviii] '[a] term which is used in second-century authors to signal ignorance of Greek' (Swain 2004 22, with further discussion at 38–39).
[xxix] Apuleius does the same (*Apology* 24.6), see Swain 2004 13. Fronto again mentions his origins at VdH 132.19–20.

[xxx] For the use of Punic and Latin in Madauros, Apuleius' homeland, see Bradley 2012 143–146. For the continuous use and coexistence of Punic and Latin in the province of Africa, see Adams 2003a 200–245. The majority of scholars agree that Apuleius' L1 was Punic. See, for instance, Harrison 2000 2, Graverini 2012 165. Adams 2007 570, on the other hand, is more restrained in his determination.
[xxxi] Elsewhere Apuleius stresses his facility in Greek and Latin (*Apol*. 4.1, 36.6; *Flor*. 9.27–29, 18.16), but the significance of the introduction of the *Metamorphoses* is that he presents language learning as a process for a non-native speaker. Of course, we need to be mindful of the *topos* of rhetorical modesty and inadequacies of speech, which is particularly common in prefaces (on this motif, see Harrison 1990 510). Nonetheless, as Nicolini 2011 33 observes, Apuleius portrays himself as conditioned by his foreignness and linguistic and cultural adaptability.
[xxxii] For edited texts and translations of all three works, see Harrison et al. 2002.
[xxxiii] See Mattiacci 2014 and accompanying bibliography for a comprehensive discussion of Apuleius' complex linguistic identity. This is conditioned by his African roots and the resulting translingual engagement with a network of languages and cultures that respect yet may also metamorphose through the different usage paths via which Latin and Greek reached the province of Africa. Similarly, yet with a stronger focus on identity, Stone 2014 argues that the evolving and malleable process of identification better describes Apuleius' literary output and his constant redefinition of himself.
[xxxiv] On the multicultural perspectives of the *Metamorphoses*, see Bowie 2008, Morales 2008, Schlam 1992, Tilg 2014. On Plato's influence, see O'Brien 2002, Winkle 2013.
[xxxv] On the elusive yet meaningful presence of Madauros in the *Metamorphoses*, see Graverini 2012 185–188, 200–207.