

## BILINGUALISM AND THE LATIN LANGUAGE

Bilingualism has become since the 1980s one of the main themes of sociolinguistics, but there are as yet few large-scale treatments of the subject specific to the ancient world. This book is the first work to deal systematically with bilingualism during a period of antiquity (the Roman period, down to about the fourth century AD) in the light of sociolinguistic discussions of bilingual issues. The general theme of the work is the nature of the contact between Latin and numerous other languages spoken in the Roman world. Among the many issues discussed three are prominent: code-switching (the practice of switching between two languages in the course of a single utterance) and its motivation, language contact as a cause of linguistic change, and the part played by language choice and language switching in conveying a sense of identity.

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J. N. ADAMS

*Senior Research Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford*



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*To the memory of  
H. D. Jocelyn  
1933–2000*

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## *Preface*

I first began working on contact between Latin and other languages in an organised way when I had the good fortune to be Visiting Senior Research Fellow at St John's College, Oxford, in 1994–5. The project was given impetus by the invitation to deliver the J. H. Gray Lectures in the Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge, in May 1999. The title of the lectures was the same as that of the present book. The subject turned out to have such ramifications, and the material relevant to it to be so scattered, that I might never have finished the book had I not had the even greater good fortune to be elected to a Senior Research Fellowship at All Souls College, Oxford, in 1997.

An account of the full range of bilingualism in the ancient world across the whole of the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern areas and at all recorded periods would be virtually unmanageable, unless a team of collaborators was assembled. I have restricted myself to the Roman period, from the early Republic to the late Empire (approximately the fourth century). I have not adopted a fixed cut-off point, but on the whole have avoided entering into the period of the barbarian invasions in the west. In the western Empire Latin came into conflict with a number of vernacular languages and eventually effected their death. In the east similarly the Romans behaved as if vernacular languages did not exist, but here by contrast they were prepared to use Greek as a *lingua franca*, and consequently Latin did not cause language death, since it remained very much in the background. The eastern Empire is represented in the book by case studies devoted to Egypt, where the evidence is far superior to that from other eastern regions, and to the trading community at Delos; various eastern languages are also dealt with in Chapter 2. But the full story of bilingualism in the east would not be the story of bilingualism and the *Latin* language, and I have left much of the area to others.

Bilingualism has become since the 1980s one of the major themes of sociolinguistics. It has also attracted some attention from classicists.



Students of bilingualism in the Roman world have tended to concentrate on the quality of upper-class Romans' knowledge of Greek, on loan-words (which as often as not are used by monolinguals and are thus not necessarily relevant to bilingualism), on anecdotal rather than primary evidence, and on the pretentious bilingual games played by the educated in genres such as epic (I refer, for example, to etymologising and to what has been called '(mis)translation by paronomasia' in a recent book by O'Hara (1996)). I have first and foremost looked for primary material, and have had at least as much to say about ordinary bilinguals as about the literary classes. Unlike virtually all previous writers on Roman bilingualism, I have not restricted myself to Latin in relation to Greek, but have collected for the first time most, if not all, of the evidence for contact between Latin and languages other than Greek. In Chapter 2 material is cited and discussed from about sixteen languages, though admittedly some of these are scarcely attested. The evidence for Oscan, Gaulish, Punic and Aramaic in contact with Latin seems to me to be particularly important.

Perhaps the best recent works about aspects of bilingualism in the Roman world are the book by Bruno Rochette (*Le latin dans le monde grec* (1997)), and various papers on code-switching by Otta Wenskus (1990s onwards). Both scholars confine themselves to Latin and Greek in contact. Rochette's approach is mainly historical, whereas that of the present book is mainly sociolinguistic. Wenskus uses literary evidence rather than inscriptions and papyri, and her work is thus complementary to mine, in which more attention is given to texts on wood, stone and papyrus, though I have also covered the literary texts of most importance (e.g. those by Plautus, Lucilius, Cicero, Varro, Petronius, Juvenal and Martial).

In this book I make one of the first attempts to deal systematically with bilingualism during a period of antiquity in the light of recent sociolinguistic discussion of bilingual issues. I consider a host of texts which may well be unfamiliar to many classicists, ancient historians and linguists. Three major topics (among others: see the next paragraph) have been identified and discussed in the book: code-switching (the practice of switching between two languages in the course of a single utterance) and its relationship to interference and borrowing, language contact as a determinant of linguistic change in the languages in contact, and the part played by language choice and language switching in the projection of a sense of identity. *Code-switching* has emerged in recent years as the most problematic feature of bilinguals' performance. There is a mass of evidence for the practice from Roman antiquity, in primary sources

(inscriptions and papyri) and literature (e.g. Plautus, Lucilius and Cicero), and involving several languages in addition to Greek in contact with Latin, but it has scarcely been recognised as a phenomenon separate from borrowing (or ‘grecism’) by classicists (but see above on the work of Wenskus). I have assessed the determinants of code-switching partly in the light of recent explanatory models, and attempted to bring out the importance of the ancient evidence (neglected by linguists) to the general debate. Linguists have had little to say to date about code-switching in written form, and I have stressed the inadequacy of applying to a written text the same methodologies as those used by linguists investigating modern speech communities. *Language change* has usually been regarded by historical linguists as a response to pressures operating within a language itself, but there is now a growing awareness that outside contacts are influential. Latin was subject to influence from a variety of languages, and Greek and various vernacular languages for their part were subject to influence from Latin. As far as *identity* is concerned, there has been much written on the subject in recent years by classicists, but one will look in vain for a serious discussion of the bilingual dimension. Bilinguals can constantly be seen to be conveying types of identity by linguistic means when they speak or write in bilingual contexts (see the summary in the second section of Chapter 9).

An assortment of other topics familiar in current studies of bilingualism is discussed. Roman language policies and linguistic nationalism within the spheres of imperial administration and the army are dealt with mainly in the chapter on Egypt. I discuss second-language acquisition at social levels below that of the élite, in the Roman army, in various commercial communities and within the civil administration of Egypt. Related to this subject is the question whether there were pidgins or creoles in the period, and I have identified forms of communication conducted by means of what I call ‘reduced language’. Diglossia is discussed particularly (but not exclusively) within the Egyptian context under Roman rule, and standard claims about the phenomenon questioned. Accommodation (whereby a speaker or writer modifies his language in some way to suit the addressee) is another topic which bulks large in recent sociolinguistic literature, and there is a good deal of interesting evidence for the practice from Roman antiquity which is assessed here. Regional variation in Latin as determined by contact with other languages is a major theme of Chapter 4; the definitive account of regional variation in the Roman period (anticipating the fragmentation of the Latin language into different Romance languages) has yet to be written, and this book has

much evidence which has been little noticed, if at all. Inseparable from language shift (whereby a people moves from one language to another, as happened in Gaul, Spain, Africa, Etruria and the Oscan, Umbrian and Venetic territories in the material covered by this book) is the habit which speakers have of changing or modifying their names in response to the pressures of language contact. Names and name changing in a variety of languages are discussed. The tendency of scholars to treat lower-class Latin as monolithic is noted, and a sub-category of Vulgar Latin identified, which I call 'Greeks' Latin'. Themes such as bilingualism in the army, provincial élites and language learning, Jewish communities and bilingualism, bilingualism and slavery, language choice as a form of power or as an expression of solidarity, also come up. The bilingual dimension to literacy (usually disregarded in accounts of ancient literacy) is considered. What, for example, is the relationship between the acquisition of a second language, and the acquisition of literacy in that language? What is the significance of transliterated texts (e.g. Latin texts written in Greek script)?

The book falls loosely into two parts. The first four chapters are thematic, and the next four present case studies devoted to particular places and texts. It goes without saying that there are many places in the Roman world where bilingualism must have been commonplace (e.g. Sicily) which are passed over in silence here.

It must be acknowledged that there are many other ways of approaching bilingualism. A historian, for example, would presumably be more interested than I am in the chronology of language learning and language shift in particular areas, and in establishing linguistic boundaries across the Empire. Nevertheless, though the book is written from the viewpoint of a philologist, a good deal of it will, I hope, be of interest to historians, and much of the earlier part has to do with Latin literature.

I have made it a principle to cite the ancient evidence in the text. Much of the evidence on which this book is based (such as that to do with Aramaic and Punic) will be inaccessible to many readers, and it seemed sensible to bring together this little-known material in a form which would allow future readers to subject it to their own analysis. Evidence is a given, but modern ideas about that evidence come and go, and what seems a clever idea to one generation may well seem inept to the next; there can be no doubt that theories about bilingualism will continue to evolve. I have not followed the modern practice of translating every single word and passage in a foreign language into English, though I have used my judgment in translating selectively. Most of the material

*Preface*

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in languages other than Greek and Latin is translated, if, that is, it is translatable: some fragmentary texts in poorly attested languages simply do not admit of translations of the type found in the Loeb series. When I choose not to translate, the issues raised by the passage in question are made clear in the accompanying discussion.

I should point out here that in the transliterated Latin texts in Greek script which come up often in the book I have not attempted to accent the Latin. Therefore if a text in Greek letters is in a mixture of two languages (Greek and Latin) only the parts I consider to be in Greek will be accented.

I owe a considerable debt to many people. David Bain, Alan Bowman, James Clackson, Nicholas Horsfall, Nigel Kay, David Langslow and Harm Pinkster read all or substantial parts of the manuscript, and made many corrections and criticisms and provided me with items of bibliography. John Penney responded generously and with considerable learning to the numerous queries I sent him over a long period. Many others gave me bibliographical material or information and help of one sort or another, and to all of them I would like to express my gratitude: Frédérique Biville, Paul Brand, John Briscoe, Alison Cooley, Eleanor Dickey, Matthew Dickie, Andrew Dyck, Penny Fewster, Jane Gardner, Stephen Harrison, John Healey, Tony Honoré, Mark Janse, Joshua Katz, Christina Kraus, Csaba La'da, John Ma, Robert Maltby, Torsten Meissner, Fergus Millar, Stephen Oakley, Mark Pobjoy, Nicholas Purcell, Michael Reeve, Bruno Rochette, Donald Russell, Ian Rutherford, Simon Swain, Sarolta Takacs, David Taylor, Otta Wenskus. My old friend Harry Jocelyn sadly died while the book was being written. He would, I am sure, have found much in it to annoy him, and it would certainly have contained fewer errors and less jargon if he had been able to direct his caustic gaze at the manuscript. I dedicate the book to his memory.

J. N. Adams

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(Chapter 4) Plutarch, *Quaest. Rom.* 103, 288F, from PLUTARCH MORALIA VOLUME IV, Loeb Classical Library Volume L305, translated by Frank C. Babbitt; Cicero, *Brutus* 258, from CICERO VOLUME V, Loeb Classical Library Volume L342, translated by W. H. Semple, E. H. Warmington, W. B. Anderson; Quintilian 1.1.13, from QUINTILIAN VOLUME 1, Loeb Classical Library Volume L124N, translated by Donald A. Russell;

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## Abbreviations

For abbreviations of editions of papyri and ostraca, see J. F. Oates, *Checklist of Editions of Greek Papyri, Ostraca and Tablets*, 5th edn (Atlanta, 1995)

- CEL* see Cugusi (1992)  
*CGL* G. Goetz et al. (eds.), *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum*, 7 vols. (Leipzig and Berlin, 1888–1923)  
*ChLA* A. Bruckner, R. Marichal et al. (eds.), *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores* (Olten, Lausanne etc., 1954– )  
*CIE* *Corpus Inscriptionum Etruscarum* (Leipzig etc., 1893– )  
*CIL* *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin, 1862– )  
*CIS* *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum* (Paris, 1881– )  
*CJI* J.-B. Frey (ed.), *Corpus of Jewish Inscriptions. Jewish Inscriptions from the Third Century B.C. to the Seventh Century A.D.* (New York, 1975)  
*CLE* F. Buecheler (ed.), *Carmina Latina Epigraphica*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1897–1926)  
*CPL* R. Cavenaile, *Corpus Papyrorum Latinarum* (Wiesbaden, 1958)  
*CSEL* *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Vienna, 1866– )  
*FEW* W. von Wartburg, *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bonn, 1928– )  
*FIRA* S. Riccobono et al. (eds.), *Fontes Iuris Romani Antejustiniani*, 2nd edn, 3 vols. (Florence, 1968–9)  
*GL* H. Keil (ed.), *Grammatici Latini*, 7 vols. (Leipzig, 1855–80)  
*ICUR* *Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae* (vol. 1, Rome, 1857; n.s., vols. II–IX, Vatican City, 1935–85)  
*ID* F. Durrbach et al. (eds.), *Inscriptions de Délos* (Paris, 1926– )  
*IG* *Inscriptiones Graecae* (Berlin, 1873– )  
*IGBulg* G. Mihailov (ed.), *Inscriptiones Graecae in Bulgaria repertae*, 5 vols. (Sofia, 1970–97)

<i>IGLS</i>	J.-P. Rey-Coquais (ed.), <i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie</i> VI (Paris, 1967)
<i>IGPhilae</i>	see A. Bernand (1969)
<i>IGPorto</i>	see Sacco (1984)
<i>IGRRP</i>	R. Cagnat et al. (eds.), <i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes</i> , 3 vols. (I, III, IV) (Paris, 1901–27)
<i>IGUR</i>	L. Moretti (ed.), <i>Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae</i> , (Rome, 1968– )
<i>ILAlg</i>	S. Gsell and H.-G. Pflaum (eds.), <i>Inscriptions latines de L'Algérie</i> , 2 vols. (Paris, 1922–76)
<i>ILBulg</i>	B. Gerov (ed.), <i>Inscriptiones Latinae in Bulgaria repertae</i> (Sofia, 1989)
<i>ILCV</i>	E. Diehl (ed.), <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres</i> , 3 vols. (Berlin, 1925–31)
<i>ILGR</i>	see Šašel Kos (1979)
<i>ILI</i>	see A. and J. Šašel (1963)
<i>ILLRP</i>	A. Degrassi (ed.), <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Liberae Rei Publicae</i> , 2 vols. (I, 2nd edn, 1965, II, 1963) (Florence)
<i>ILS</i>	H. Dessau (ed.), <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> , 3 vols. (Berlin, 1892–1916)
<i>IM</i>	see Parlangèli (1960)
<i>IMS</i>	M. Mirković et al. (eds.), <i>Inscriptions de la Mésie Supérieure</i> (Belgrade, 1976– )
<i>IPO</i>	see Thylander (1952)
<i>IPT</i>	see Levi Della Vida and Amadasi Guzzo (1987)
<i>IRB</i>	see Mariner Bigorra (1973)
<i>IRT</i>	see Reynolds and Ward Perkins (1952)
<i>ISM</i>	D. M. Pippidi and I. I. Russu (eds.), <i>Inscriptiones Daciae et Scythiae Minoris antiquae</i> (Bucharest, 1975– )
<i>KAI</i>	see Donner and Röllig (1966–9)
Lewis and Short	C. T. Lewis and C. Short, <i>A Latin Dictionary</i> (Oxford, 1879)
LSJ	H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, <i>A Greek–English Lexicon</i> (revised and augmented by H. S. Jones, with a revised supplement, 1996) (Oxford, 1996)
<i>MAMA</i>	W. M. Calder et al. (eds.), <i>Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua</i> , 8 vols. (Manchester, 1928–62)
<i>OCD</i>	<i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> , 3rd edn (Oxford, 1996)



xxviii	<i>Abbreviations</i>
<i>OLD</i>	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> (Oxford, 1968–82)
<i>PAT</i>	see Hillers and Cusini (1996)
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> ( <i>Patrologiae cursus completus, series Graeca</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne) (Paris, 1857– )
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> ( <i>Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne) (Paris, 1844– )
<i>PLRE</i>	A. H. M. Jones, J. R. Martindale and J. Morris, <i>The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire</i> , 3 vols. (Cambridge, 1971–92)
<i>REW</i>	W. Meyer-Lübke, <i>Romanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch</i> , 3rd edn (Heidelberg, 1935)
<i>RIB</i>	R. G. Collingwood, R. P. Wright et al. (eds.), <i>The Roman Inscriptions of Britain</i> (Oxford, 1975– )
<i>RPC</i>	A. Burnett, M. Amandry and P. P. Ripollès, <i>Roman Provincial Coinage</i> (London and Paris, 1992– )
<i>SB</i>	see Shackleton Bailey (1965–70)
<i>SB</i>	F. Priesigke (ed.), <i>Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Ägypten</i> (Strassburg, 1915– )
<i>TLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i> (Leipzig, 1900– )