

Alessandro Garcea/Michela Rosellini/Luigi Silvano (eds.): *Latin in Byzantium I. Late Antiquity and Beyond*. Turnhout: Brepols 2019 (Corpus Christianorum. Lingua Patrum 12). 564 p. € 230.00. ISBN: 978-2-503-58492-8.

This book, which present itself as a “project on literacy, cultural identity and the transmission of Latin texts in ‘New Rome’” (7), includes twenty-five articles dedicated to many aspects of Latin in Byzantium and in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages. Most papers were presented at colloquia held in Rome and Paris in 2015 and 2016. The sheer quantity of contributions and breadth of interests does make this book what it aims to be, “a comprehensive [...] view of these problems” (8). However, one does not get the impression that there is a real dialogue among the contributions (cross-references, to mention only one obvious aspect, are limited). So it is easier and it makes more sense to discuss the single contributions separately.

Guglielmo Cavallo’s essay is called “*Rhomaika*. Una introduzione” (11–24). The term *Rhomaika* makes it clear how ‘Latin’ in the book title is to be understood, for it refers not only to the Latin language but to Roman culture and identity. This is a deliberately desultory essay, touching upon as many and different aspects of the persistence of Latinity in Constantinople as the dedications and illustrations in manuscripts, the texts known as *Patria*, the claims of Byzantine emperors to descend from illustrious Romans, and the knowledge of Virgil. Cavallo’s essay functions well as an introduction inasmuch as it gives an idea of the various and sometimes narrow ways in which Roman culture and identity survived in Byzantium down to the Middle Ages.

A couple of articles written by two of the editors constitute the section of the “General framework” (25–70). Luigi Silvano’s essay (“*Desuetudine longa ... subeunt verba Latina*: The Transition From Late Antique to Medieval Byzantium and the Fall of Latin”, 27–41), which draws upon the conclusions of the contributions of this book, examines the question as to what chronological framework best captures the development of Latin at Byzantium, which he depicts as one of decline and fall. He argues for a long perspective, from the age of Constantine to the twelfth century. This is the chronological framework of the book.

Alessandro Garcea's view of the diffusion of Latin in the East is that of a 'non-linear trend', where phenomena of both bilingualism and diglossia played a role. The article ("Latin in Byzantium: Different Forms of Linguistic Contact", 43–70) is structured around four case-studies: Constantine's linguistic 'nationalism'; multilingualism in fourth-century Constantinople; 'dual-lingualism' under Theodosius II; the constitution of an 'interlanguage' under Justinian. There is a wealth of evidence, but also perhaps too much linguistic jargon. I can contribute two minor observations. First, like in several other articles in this book, words like *κόμητης* and *μαγίστρου* from *comitis* and *magistri* are called "transliterations": I would rather consider them loanwords, because the morphology is completely Greek. Second, on p. 56 Garcea suggests that two petitions by the archimandrite Eutyches to the emperor presented at the Home Synod of 448–449 were probably written in Latin. However, I should like to point out that it was normal for Greek speakers in the East to address the emperor in Greek. Moreover, it is usually specified in conciliar texts when something has been translated, while in these two petitions there is no such indication.

The book is divided into thematic sections but this is not very helpful, for the section titles are quite vague, as is the connection between them and the articles. The first section is called "Latin in the Empire: Texts and People" (71–128). Jean-Luc Fournet ("La pratique du latin dans l'Égypte de l'Antiquité tardive", 73–91) provides an informative overview of Latin in Egypt through Egyptian papyri. As is well known, Egypt was never really Latinized linguistically and Greek always remained dominant. The article illustrates this situation by looking at the following: the disappearance of Latin private letters in Late Antiquity; bilingual court trials; subscription formulas in administrative documents; formulas in notarial acts, among which abound hybrid Greek-Latin forms, showing the status of Latin as a juridical language *par excellence* but also the absence of genuine bilingual competences. Phenomena of bilingualism, digraphism, and metagrammatism are discussed. Finally, Fournet discusses Latin literary papyri which are rather common in the fourth to sixth century because Greek speakers looking to work in the administration needed to learn some Latin.

Claudia Rapp ("The Use of Latin in the Context of Multilingual Monastic Communities in the East", 93–107) looks at the use of Latin in eastern multilingual monastic communities, focusing on western pilgrims traveling to

the Holy Land (the well-known cases of Jerome, Rufinus, etc.) and the monasteries of Mar Saba, Egypt, and the Sinai. While knowledge of Latin was only sporadic in these contexts, it was a language of prestige, because its speakers coming from the West were of high social status and because in the East only the very educated learned it as a foreign language.

Gabriel Nocchi Macedo (“Writing Latin in Late Antique Constantinople”, 109–128) provides an overview of the use of Latin writing in Constantinople from the fourth to the sixth century, based on extant manuscripts and inscriptions (although with manuscripts one can hardly ever be certain that they were actually copied in Constantinople). Latin texts point to a limited and specialized use of the language, which was always somewhat connected to the imperial court and ruling elite. As for inscriptions, Greek was the norm and Latin was used mostly in official honorific inscriptions as a symbol of the connection with ‘old’ Rome. The article includes two helpful tables listing the fragments of manuscripts in BR uncial and the Latin inscriptions found in Constantinople.

The next section is called “The Laws of the Language and the Language of the Laws” (129–243). Andrea Pellizzari (“La lingua degli Ἰταλοί. Conoscenza e uso del latino nell’Oriente greco di IV secolo attraverso l’opera di Libanio”, 131–142) focuses on Libanius, Greek rhetor at Antioch, famous among the other things for lamenting the shift from the study of rhetoric to that of law and especially Latin. His perspective was different from ours: we assume that only few people learned Latin, but for him those few people were his potential students, so that made a big difference to him. Pellizzari shows that Libanius was more intransigent against Latin teaching on official occasions than in his teaching and private letters, where he was rather conciliatory, also depending on his addressee. The author also suggests that Libanius may have been able to read Latin but denied it as if posturing as a Greek “nationalist” (141). I would rather think that, if Libanius had actually known Latin, he would have boasted about it to increase his cultural prestige.

Juan Signes Codoñer’s essay (“Asymmetric Exchange: Latin Speakers Learning Greek and Greek Speakers Learning Latin in Late Antiquity. On the Evidence of Grammars and Bilingual Texts”, 143–162) is probably the one that in this volume tackles the question of bilingualism in the broadest and most systematic way, trying to make sense of the disparate range of texts concerning the teaching of either language in Late Antiquity. In the preliminary section, he questions the linguistic codification of bilingual types of

texts proposed by Alex Mullen in her introduction to the fundamental volume edited with Patrick James (*Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds*. Cambridge 2012): Signes Codoñer suggests that one should also take into account questions of Greek diglossia (*Attic/koine*) and the attitudes of the Roman elite towards the learning of Greek (but I believe that Mullen's codification is still valid). In the main body of the article, the "asymmetric exchange" of the title refers to the different number of Latin and Greek school grammars in Late Antiquity: while there are many Latin ones, Signes Codoñer lists only one Greek grammar. His explanation for this is that many Greek speakers needed to learn Latin as adolescents, while the Latin elites learnt Greek already in their childhood. To be sure, however, this is the situation described by Quintilian in the first century, while the paper does not consider whether the situation was different in Late Antiquity. Another aspect that is not explicitly mentioned in the article is that the grammars listed are but a part of the grammars produced and circulating in Late Antiquity.

Michela Rosellini and Elena Spangenberg Yanes ("L'insegnamento di Prisciano", 163–181) look at the work of the grammarian Priscian as possible evidence that Latin was well-established in sixth-century Constantinople. To be sure, the authors do not think they can draw conclusions about the degree Latin was spoken in Constantinople based on Priscian's work. The first part of the article is dedicated to study what sources were available to Priscian, that is in a way what Latin books were available in Constantinople. The fact that he did not use as many authors in the last two books of his *Ars grammatica*, which do not have the same sources as the previous sixteen, suggests that he did so either because he had little time or because these texts were not really available to him directly. I would incline towards the first explanation. The second part examines Priscian's work as a possible source for the Latin that was current in Constantinople. Little emerges, for the teaching was based by and large on canonical literary authors. On p. 179, however, Spangenberg Yanes points to one case of late usage and juristic language. There are several more cases in her commentary on Book 18 of Priscian's *Ars grammatica* and I have listed them in my review of that commentary in *Gnomon* 92.3, 2020, 220.

Marc Baratin's essay ("Sur un silence de Jean le Lydien", 183–198) is also connected with Priscian. He looks at John the Lydian, who succeeded Priscian on the Latin chair at Constantinople but never mentioned him in his *De magistratibus*, a work that deals with Latin grammar in a way complementary

to Priscian's *Ars*. Baratin suggests that this may be because of Priscian's association with people involved in the Nika revolt of 532 and with some expressions in his *Ars* reeking of monophysitism in a context where dyophysitism was the rule. These are admittedly conjectural reasons based on scanty evidence – would eight references to the monophysite formula *una eademque persona* in an extensive work like Priscian's *Ars* be really noticeable? –, but Baratin makes an interesting attempt to locate Priscian's work in his historical and social context. Yet I would not play down the suggestion that John might have not mentioned Priscian due to academic rivalry. This is not so much projecting the present onto the past as recognizing common patterns between the present and the past.

Thomas Ernst van Bochove (“Justinianus Latinograecus. Language and Law during the Reign of Justinian”, 199–243) profusely discusses Justinian's codification, illustrating the transition of legislation from the Latin to the Greek language. The system of legal education established by Justinian included lectures in Greek on Latin codification. This produced a technical language that the author styles as ‘Latinogreek’.

The following section is called “Latin as a *Medium* at the Service of the Power” (245–294). Frédérique Biville (“Le rituel des acclamations: de Rome à ‘Byzance’”, 247–263) follows the development of acclamations from Rome to the eastern part of the Roman Empire. At Constantinople they became so ingrained in the court rituals that a list of acclamations is provided in the tenth-century *Book of ceremonies*. An interesting part is the focus on the persistence of Latin elements in Greek ceremonial language. An aspect that falls outside the scope of this article is the important role of acclamations at Church councils.

Vincent Zarini's discussion of the life and works of the African poet Corippus (or rather Gorippus) would provide material for books, and yet here it fits into a short article (“L'univers grec et latin d'un poète africain: Corippe et Byzance”, 265–274). Unlike other scholars, Zarini defends the view that Gorippus went to Constantinople, where his African identity remained strong but his view of world politics became wider. Zarini sees Gorippus' use of Latin, a language of consensus, as a sign of his allegiance to the Empire.

Andreas Rhoby [“Latin inscriptions in (Early) Byzantium”, 275–294] provides an overview of the relatively few Latin inscriptions in the eastern part

of the Roman Empire from the fourth to the sixth century. As stated also in Nocchi Macedo's contribution, Latin inscriptions found in Constantinople are mostly official and honorific. One interesting aspect is that bilingual inscriptions do not have two texts of which one is the translation of the other, but two different versions of the same subject (282–283). This practice can be observed outside inscriptions as well, for the Emperor Marcian's Latin and Greek speeches at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 are also two different versions of the same subject.¹

The next section is called "Latin Texts as Sources" (295–411). Bruno Rochette ("La traduction du latin en grec à Byzance: un aperçu général", 297–312) provides an overview of translations from Latin into Greek at Byzantium. He concludes that the translations of pagan texts were few and mostly utilitarian, as they were intended as teaching instruments. Only the translations of Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue* and Eutropius' *Breviarium* had a literary character (Virgil's was even revisited and Christianized). There were certainly more translations of Christian texts. This scenario fits well in the bigger picture of a Greek East where Latin was a technical language used by professionals and Greek was the language of the majority as well as the language of culture.

Gianfranco Agosti's essay ("Modelli latini per poemi greci? Sulla possibile influenza di autori latini sulla poesia epica tardoantica", 313–331) is a well-thought and informed discussion of the methodologies of intertextual research. The specific subject is whether Greek poets from the third to the sixth century knew, used and imitated Latin poets (especially Virgil and Ovid). By analyzing several passages, Agosti shows that it is difficult, if at all possible, to prove that this was actually the case. While it is possible that Greek poets knew and sometimes were inspired by famous passages of Latin poets, none of the texts examined display overt intertextuality that could be recognized and appreciated by the audience. The late antique readership in the East perceived the Greek and Latin literary systems as different and separate.

Christian Gastgeber ("Latin and the Chronicon Paschale", 333–347) focuses on Latin in the *Chronicon Paschale*, a chronicle covering up to around 630. Latin terms are especially common at the end of the chronicle, in a

1 See T. Mari: Greek, Latin, and more: Multilingualism at the ecumenical Council of Chalcedon. In: *Journal of Latin Linguistics* 19.1, 2020, 59–87, esp. 72–73.

section that probably used different sources from the rest of the text. Gastgeber provides a comprehensive list of Latin terms, divided by semantic field. Unsurprisingly, terms referring to army and administration come on top. I have some minor observations. In the list of Latin terms on p. 338, the author includes *ναύτης* and *σχολή* as if they were loanwords from Latin *nauta* and *schola*, but these were originally Greek words (*σχολή* in a military acceptance is rather a re-semanticization based on Latin *schola* than a loanword proper). On p. 345, a discussion of Latin script in the manuscript of the *Chronicon Paschale* includes the faithful reproduction of some words from the manuscript itself, showing a mix of and confusion between Greek and Latin. As no transliteration is provided, it is difficult to follow the discussion. Finally, a note to those readers who might be puzzled by the abbreviation ‘a. o.’, which is found a couple of times in the article but is unparalleled in English: this must mean ‘among other(s)’ and is a direct translation of the common German abbreviation ‘u. a.’ (*unter anderem*).

Umberto Roberto’s paper [“Sulla conoscenza del latino nell’Oriente romano nel periodo tra Maurizio ed Eraclio (582–641): il caso degli storici-funzionari e di Giovanni di Antiochia”, 349–360] deals with the knowledge of Latin among some bureaucrat-historians of the late sixth and early seventh century, especially John of Antioch, who wrote the *Historia chroniké*. John was interested in Roman antiquities and in particular the Roman republic. As for his actual knowledge of Latin, however, little can be concluded for certain: Latin authors may have been cited through intermediate sources, and the use of Latinisms does not speak for somebody’s knowledge of Latin, since Latin loanwords were present and well integrated into the Greek language at that stage.

The same observation holds for Laura Mecella’s argument that Peter the Patrician’s use of Latinisms speaks for his good acquaintance with Latin (“Latinismi e cultura letteraria nei frammenti di Pietro Patrizio: per un’indagine sul *De cerimoniis* e sugli *Excerpta Historica Constantiniana*”, 361–375). Of course Peter, a prominent Byzantine official under Justinian, might have known Latin very well anyway, because of his upbringing, training, and position at court. His missions to Ostrogothic Italy might also suggest that. Peter wrote several works of which we have fragments. Mecella observes that the more technical works use more Latinisms, while in his *ιστορία* Peter follows the conventions of traditional historiography and uses fewer of them.

Olivier Gengler (“Latin Literature in Johannes Malalas’s *Chronicle*”, 377–393) focuses on Latin literature in John Malalas’ *Chronicle*. Malalas refers to thirteen Latin authors, and the way he cites some of their passages suggests to Gengler that his familiarity with Latin literature was not as superficial as many scholars assume. At any rate, Malalas thought these authors deserving to be cited and included as illustrious Romans in the public memory of his time.

Alessandro Capone’s contribution (“Appunti per un lessico grecolatino tardoantico: la traduzione latina di Gregorio di Nazianzo trasmessa dal *Laur. S. Marco* 584, 395–411) is a preliminary bilingual lexicon based on the Latin translations of some works by Gregory of Nazianzus preserved in the manuscript of Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, San Marco 584. The lexicon currently includes only the words beginning with α . To be sure, this contribution seems somewhat complementary to the scope of this volume, for the translations analyzed were probably produced in sixth-century Lombardy, so it rather testifies to the knowledge of Greek in the West than to that of Latin in Byzantium.

The last section is called “Latin Vocabulary Transmitted across Space and Time” (413–473). José-Domingo Rodríguez Martín (“On the Use of Latin Legal Terminology in the Byzantine Legal Treatise *De actionibus*”, 415–430) looks at the *Liber de actionibus*, a list of Latin procedural actions being explained in Greek. The author shows how Latin juridical terms became gradually integrated into Greek: while some were kept in the original Latin, others were transliterated, acclimated to Greek morphology, and even translated, at times yielding semantic calques. An interesting aspect of the article is how Latin terms were sometimes misunderstood, which reflected onto the reality of Byzantine law.

Massimo Miglietta (“Per lo studio dei rapporti tra *Istituzioni* di Giustiniano e *Libri basilici*”, 431–445) looks at the influence of Justinian’s *Institutiones*, a textbook for law students, on Byzantine juridical scholarship, especially through the Greek paraphrase attributed to Theophilus. This article presents itself as a preliminary contribution to the topic, and focuses on some passages in particular. It seems the most esoteric contribution in this volume.

Peter Schreiner’s contribution [“Latinité cachée à Constantinople (VIe–moitié XIIIe siècles)”, 447–463] on ‘hidden’ Latin at Constantinople between the late sixth and the mid-thirteenth century is as wide in the chronology

covered as is desultory in the treatment. He looks at the following: the mixed language of juridical texts before the *exhellenismos* (the translation of these texts from Latin into Greek); the traces of Latin script in Greek juridical texts (including several reproductions from manuscripts); the impact of western merchants on the knowledge of Latin in Medieval Constantinople; the presence of Latin elements at the Byzantine court and chancery well into the Middle Ages; a new, albeit limited, interest in Latin at Constantinople after the mid-thirteenth century thanks to Dominicans and Franciscans. The conclusion that after the sixth century no knowledge of the Latin language existed at Constantinople is quite drastic.

The last article (“I latinismi nella lingua greca moderna”, 465–473), by Johannes Niehoff-Panagiotidis, deals with some Latinisms in modern Greek dialects (*cubiculum*, *diarium*, *signum*, *siligo*). According to the author, these once circulated in Byzantium but then disappeared and were preserved only in marginal areas. There are some statements that may require clarification. On p. 466 the author talks of “Latino parlato/volgare”: this is fine as long as it is clear that these two expressions are not equivalent, because spoken Latin was not necessarily ‘vulgar’ (whatever the term actually means). On p. 470 the author states that the ancient Greek form *σίλιγνις* derives from “protoromanzo **silignem*” (with syncope), but I find it improper to speak of Proto-Romance here, because this word has practically no reflexes in Romance languages and because *σίλιγνις* is attested already in the second-century author Galen, a time when one cannot speak of Romance languages. This is rather a syncopated Latin word, whether one wants to ascribe it to ‘Vulgar Latin’ or not. The same observation holds for the author’s conclusion that behind these four loanwords one may see the first traces of a Romance language spoken around the Mediterranean in imperial times (473): this was not a Romance language, but Latin.

All in all, it is not easy to draw straightforward conclusions about Latin in Byzantium based on this volume, for some contributions highlight knowledge of Latin in some groups while others minimize it, based on the different angles from which they look at the topic. This reflects not only the different approaches of the single contributors but a complex reality.

On p. 8, the editors express the hope that this volume will encourage others to pursue lines of research that were not given adequate consideration here, as for example: a census of Latinisms in Medieval Greek; a mapping of Latin in modern Greek dialects; a survey of Latin borrowings in Medieval Greek

literature; an accurate study of translations from Latin into Greek and vice-versa; a study of the cultural representations of ancient Romans and contemporary 'Latins' in Byzantium.

The title of this volume includes the Roman numeral 'I'. Although that is not made clear in this volume, it gives hope that a second volume will follow in which these and other research questions will be addressed, hopefully in a truly interdisciplinary approach where also the visual arts can give a contribution.

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Empfohlene Zitierweise

Tommaso Mari: Rezension zu: Alessandro Garcea/Michela Rosellini/Luigi Silvano (eds.): *Latin in Byzantium I. Late Antiquity and Beyond*. Turnhout: Brepols 2019 (Corpus Christianorum. *Lingua Patrum* 12). In: *Plekos* 23, 2021, 247–259 (URL: http://www.plekos.uni-muenchen.de/2021/r-garcea_rosellini_silvano.pdf).

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