

Foreword

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The History of Linguistics in the Classical Period

Edited by Daniel J. Taylor

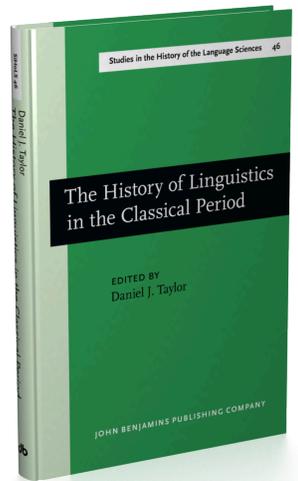
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FOREWORD

The study of Greek and Roman language science has figured prominently in the remarkable renaissance of interest in the history of linguistics that occasioned the creation of the journal *Historiographia Linguistica* and the monograph series *Studies in the History of Linguistics* (continued as *Studies in the History of Language Sciences*), and it is therefore quite appropriate that this special double-issue is being devoted exclusively to ancient linguistic theory and practice and is being separately published in monograph form as well. So to Konrad Koerner, Hans-Josef Niederehe, John and Claire Benjamins, and my colleagues on the two editorial advisory boards I express my gratitude for their decision to dedicate *HL XIII 2/3* and its monograph twin to the history of linguistics in the classical period. We know more now than we did several decades ago about what the Greeks and Romans were thinking, writing, and doing in matters grammatical, and the scholars invited to contribute to this volume are but a few among the many who are responsible for that happy circumstance. As invited editor I would like to think that the contents of this double-issue bear ample testimony to the enhanced and enlarged understanding and appreciation of ancient grammar that we now enjoy.

If editing this volume has not always been the relatively simple task which Konrad suggested it was likely to be, it has nonetheless been the remarkably pleasant one he promised it would be, thanks in large measure to the thirteen fine scholars who have contributed to the volume and the uniformly cooperative spirit which they have individually and collectively evinced from start to finish and for which I am ever so grateful. At the outset of the enterprise it was my goal to publish articles which as a whole would accomplish several objectives at once: comprehensive coverage, in a chronological sense at least, of ancient linguistics from its beginnings to the end of the classical period and maybe even beyond; a sensible mix of both Greek and Roman language science; due attention to major topics such as, e.g., the interdisciplinary nexus out of which grammar grew, Stoic linguistics, Hellenistic language study, the Roman *ars grammatica*, and so forth;

even a concern for such disparate historiographical issues as the role of philology, the importance of translation, the nature of our evidence, parallels between ancient and modern linguistics, etc.; and all this within twenty-five pages *per auctorem*, including notes and bibliography, if you please, thank you very much, and don't forget to adhere scrupulously to all of *HL's* editorial conventions! As the correspondence between Ottawa and Appleton/Florence attests, Konrad tried his level best to temper my editorial naiveté with periodic doses of more realistic expectations, but we were nevertheless both hopeful. All things considered, those hopes have been realized: the coverage is here, so is historiography, the mix is pretty much exact, the topics are most apposite. To be sure, not everything for which I had hoped is here, but almost everything is; so I am indeed eminently pleased with the contents of this special double-issue, and for that I must once again thank my contributors.

Not only have the contributors addressed the subject matter which we desired, but they have also provided the quality of scholarship which we expected; of course, given the scholarly stature of the individuals involved, that was something which we took for granted. They have also written with a sense of scholarly excitement and vigor that makes for reading which is as enjoyable as it is enlightening, and what they have to say about their topics is right there on the cutting edge of contemporary scholarship. Let me elaborate a bit on that latter point in hopes of whetting the intellectual appetites of those who are about to read the pages which follow, for our contributors all set out to augment or to revise and correct in one way or another the received, traditional accounts of Greek and Roman language science.

Three articles delve deeply into the intimate relations between language science and rhetoric, which along with dialectic constitute the three disciplines — later designated the *trivium* of the liberal arts — concerned directly with language in both its spoken and written forms. Elmar Siebenborn examines the etymology and usage of *períodos*, a term which we take for granted nowadays but whose history is really quite complex. He takes us back to the days of pre-Socratic rhetoric when principles and rules were transferred from the study of poetics and metrics to the study of prose and formal speech. The insertion, deletion, substitution, and transformation/permutation rules so familiar to modern scholars are of ancient vintage, as Wolfram Ax demonstrates in his study of the usage and evolution in antiquity of the *quadripertita ratio*, to use Quintilian's term. His sober

analysis of the ancient texts leads to a reassessment of the evidence for dating the origin of this fourfold categorical system. Marc Baratin and Françoise Desbordes continue their useful and stimulating collaboration by studying the virtues and vices of speech that together make up the so-called third part, after phonology and morphology, of the traditional Latin *ars grammatica*. They propose a radically different account of the origin and development of the *vitia virtutesque orationis*. All three articles therefore point to the close relationship between rhetoric and linguistics and literature.

Hellenistic Greek grammar receives its due. Kees Versteegh proposes an entirely novel sociolinguistic model whereby we can better understand both the diglossia which obtained in the Greek world and the grammarians' attitudes toward their speech community. He redefines the nature of the dichotomy between the standard language and the colloquial, and stresses in particular the importance of the spoken use of the standard language and the grammarians' concern for it. Urs Egli demonstrates just how easily Chomskyan trees and Montague analyses accord with fundamental principles of Stoic logic. Context-free rules, transformations, and recursion are a part of it all, and Egli's remarkably lucid exposition of such matters, which will appeal to logicians and linguists alike, makes it imperative that we make more room for Stoic syntax and semantics within the context of ancient grammatical analysis. Alan Kemp not only translates Dionysius Thrax's sometimes inelegant Greek into readable and even felicitous English, but he also adds an introduction and a lengthy series of explanatory notes, which are as useful to the classicist or historian of linguistics as to the Greekless reader (and it is to Kemp's credit that he has everywhere kept in mind the two distinct readerships to which his work is obviously going to appeal). We have needed a translation like this for some time, and I am only too happy as invited editor to be able to include it in this volume. Between Kemp's translation of the *Téchnē*, Egli's sketch of Stoic syntax and semantics, and Versteegh's treatment of the *koinḗ* and *hellenismós*, we have a grand opportunity to see Hellenistic linguistics at some of its extant best.

Two of the most famous names in the history of Latin prose are those of Marcus Varro and Aulus Gellius. In this volume Wilhelm Pfaffel continues his analysis of Varro's more sophisticated etymological methods, and Franco Cavazza introduces us to a more sophisticated Gellius in general. The formulae which Pfaffel provides are in effect a model of Varro's cogni-

tive processes as the *vir Romanorum eruditissimus* seeks to explain both synchronic and diachronic facts of the Latin language and in so doing to expand the parameters of etymology itself as a heuristic endeavor. Odds are that after reading what Cavazza has to say about Aulus Gellius a number of us are going to read, or reread as the case may be, what Gellius himself has to say about language and the formal study of language. Thanks to Cavazza we can do so rather easily, because he assiduously collects references to the more important *disiecta membra* of Gellian linguistics together for us, and he also points out where Gellius adopts an independent stance vis-à-vis his material. The names of Apollonius Dyscolus and Maximus Planudes are also well known to historians of linguistics, but David Blank explains how and why the current notions about Maximus' originality and modernity are wrong. He examines the texts of both Apollonius and Maximus and shows that what is ostensibly original in the latter, i.e., a putative localist theory of cases, is actually imported from elsewhere in Apollonius, and he also demonstrates that neither the ancient nor the mediaeval exposition of the order and meaning of the oblique cases is in any sense a localist case theory. The four grammarians we meet in these articles are rather more interesting figures than the ones with the same names we encounter in handbooks of literature and linguistics.

This volume also includes three studies of the late Latin grammarians and their important linguistic tradition. Even Hovdhaugen and Vivien Law both demonstrate that grammatical science in the late Roman empire does not manifest the monolithic nature which is usually ascribed to it. Hovdhaugen very precisely documents the diverse treatments accorded the *genera verborum* by the Roman grammarians; the linguistic milieu in Rome and Constantinople seems to have been quite active and progressive, at least insofar as verbal gender is concerned. Law describes the emergence of a new type of linguistic treatise in the fifth century, namely, the grammatical commentary, and charts the course of it and the other sorts of grammars through the centuries until the Carolingian Renaissance, when another linguistic genre, the parsing grammar, comes into being. She enumerates clearly the sociolinguistic and historical factors which affected the supply of and demand for both new and old types of grammars. Interestingly, both Hovdhaugen and Law emphasize, for quite different reasons, that a number of unknown Latin grammatical treatises are likely to have been lost at the close of classical antiquity and that the late tradition, voluminous as it is, is nonetheless less extensive than it was originally. Obviously then, the

late Latin grammatical tradition is a lively and productive one, and yet its texts are often very similar in structure and treatment. Rober Kaster explains why. He examines the sociological environment within which the grammarians lived and worked and which at times constrained them. Both the grammarians and the educated élite had a vested stake in maintaining traditional grammatical doctrine, for liberal arts education had by this time assumed a social and moral status that all too often transcended the individual wills of those who were its practitioners. And as we all know, the *ars grammatica* is the first of the liberal arts.

Each article in this volume therefore has something new to say about the history of linguistics in the classical period. What I like best is that each author insists, either explicitly or implicitly, that we need to return to the ancient texts time and time again and that we need to read them ever more carefully. Philology in this broad sense and intellectual history are often one and the same endeavor, and philology is in any case a *sine qua non* of research on the history of the language sciences in classical antiquity. The importance of returning to and closely rereading the original texts is a theme which figures prominently in the essay with which I introduce this volume. It seems to me that the rethinking so conspicuous in much of the recent scholarship in our field is pointing us in the direction of a new historiographical model of Greek and Latin linguistic science, and so I have tried to articulate some of the more obvious and significant tenets of that new model as I understand it and to address a few familiar problems from its fresh perspective. Whether we are on the verge of a major rewriting of the history of linguistics in the classical period remains to be seen, but in the meantime we can enjoy and learn much from the dozen articles here united. Regular readers of *HL* and *SiHoLS* will find the volume's format quite familiar, with but two exceptions: the twelve articles have been arranged in alphabetical order by authors' last names because not all of them fit neatly or naturally into either a chronological or a thematic order, and the individual bibliographies have all been collated into a single Master List of References.

As I conclude these prefatory remarks here in Florence under the soft Italian sunshine, I am reminded of another sunny day in Bloomington, Indiana, in 1973, which is where the idea for this special publication was first conceived by none other than Konrad Koerner. He and I were sitting around a motel swimming pool, discussing how to prepare the typescript for my monograph on Varro, which was going to be the first volume of original

research published in *Studies in the History of Linguistics*. After finishing our work and taking a dip in the pool, we turned our thoughts to the future of *Historiographia Linguistica*, the first issue of which was just about to appear. Konrad cautiously ventured the suggestion that if things went as well as he hoped, then perhaps we could at some time think about devoting an entire issue or maybe even a double-issue of *HL* and a companion volume in *SiHoL* to the history of linguistics in the classical period. That time has come, and as invited editor I once again thank the many individuals who have made it all possible.

Firenze, June 1986

D.J.T.