Priscian: A Syntactic Interpretation of a Graeco-Roman World

Biagio Gatto

UCL

PhD

I, Biagio Gatto, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed ....

A BSTRACT

Priscian is an emblematic figure of the Graeco-Roman world of late antiquity; my study focuses on the ability of grammar to account for socio-cultural factors. In the first chapter, the reading of the preface to Priscian's *Ars* places him within an established cultural framework in which Greek sources are seen as a foundation of knowledge for any kind of Latin study. The linguistic approach taken by Priscian to describe Latin grammar reflects the beliefs and the expectations of his readership, and the status of standard language as perceived by the contemporary elites. Priscian's work is evidence of the importance placed by the elites on knowledge of both Greek and Latin as a means to gain prestige and respectability in the competitive society of late antiquity. In the second and third chapters, a metalinguistic analysis of the last two books of the *Ars*, the *De constructione*, provides an insight into Priscian's method of transferring Greek elements into Latin, and helps us to shape his audience. Priscian did not merely accomplish a grammatical work; in describing and codifying the grammar of a language he synthesised a vision of a world. The fourth and fifth chapters offer a close analysis of the linguistic data used by Priscian to describe Latin syntax, namely literary quotations, and *exempla ficta*. They reflect a codified standard written language which had become by the sixth century a mark of distinction for elites, despite the spoken language taking different developments. Elites in Constantinople considered this language deeply shaped by Greek grammar, a fact that provides guidance for the interpretation that elites had of their identity. The pairing of Latin with Greek syntax enables Priscian and his readers to bridge differences on issues concerning identity and provides us with a key for understanding the idea of the Graeco-Roman world of sixth century.

My study of Priscian and his work on Latin syntax combines a philological approach with an analysis of the cultural history of Priscian's time. The benefits of my research will not be limited to linguists and philologists, but also to a wider audience of classicists, historians of late antiquity, medievalists, researchers on ancient education and Reception studies, sociologists.

My research of Priscian's grammatical doctrine looks not merely at explaining the peculiarities of ancient grammar, which is a primary interest of specialists, but also at the broader cultural context. The choice to focus on a grammatical treatise enables the modern reader to analyse the specificities of ancient educational system, and the primary role of rhetoric, which constitutes an element of continuity throughout Antiquity. Much can be learnt by looking at how ancient society educated its members. A new perspective is given to the work of the last great Latin grammarian of Antiquity. I expect that my study will bring a non-specialist audience close to a field of enquiry which has often been thought as ancillary to Classical studies.

The constant reference to Greek and Latin linguistic theories and structures through the perspective of a bilingual author provides modern readers with an example of promotion of the teaching and learning of ancient languages.

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To my family,
in Italy and in London

Priscian: life and career

Priscian was the last great Latin grammarian of Antiquity and was born in a city called Caesarea in the second half of the fifth century. We do not know much about his personal life and career but what we reconstruct from pieces of information contained in the incipits and explicits of the manuscripts of his works, from references in his works, and from few mentions in contemporary sources; we can be sure of only a few dates from Priscian's life.

The *communis opinio* considers Priscian as originating from Caesarea in Mauretania,[1] based on a well-established tradition which appears for the first time in an anonymous medieval *Vita* published in the eighth volume of the *Grammatici Latini* collection,[2] and on a passage of the *Panegyric* to Anastasius where Priscian praises the emperor for his benevolence towards western refugees.[3] He would have then moved to the East following the Vandalic invasion of the African province. We find Priscian holding a high social position in Constantinople at the beginning of the sixth century as he delivered a panegyric to the emperor Anastasius (491-518 CE) probably in 513,[4] and was a Latin professor at the city *auditorium* founded a century earlier, in 425, by the eastern emperor Theodosius II.[5]

He was author of various grammatical works which are evidence of the extent of his teaching; they include three treatises dedicated to the western aristocrat Q. Aurelius Symmachus,[6] the *De figuris numerorum*, the *De metris fabularum Terentii* and the *Praeexercitamina*, which concerned respectively with the symbols for numbers and weights, the metres of Terence's plays and other republican comic poets,

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[1] It is the modern town of Cherchell, in Algeria. There were also two eastern cities with the same name, namely in Cappadocia and in Palestine.

[2] *GL* 8, pp. clxvii-clxix.

[3] See BALLAIRA (2002 and 1989), and ZETZEL (2018). For an eastern origin of Priscian, see instead GEIGER (1999).

[4] The *Panegyric* was probably composed on an occasion of celebration for the early victories of Hypatius, Anastasius' nephew, against the usurper Vitalianus. Priscian composed the preface of the *Panegyric* in iambic trimeters, and the main body in hexameters. For a translation and comment of the text, see COYNE (1991). Of the same opinion, as regards the date and occasion of composition of the *Panegyric*, is BALLAIRA (1989 and 2002), but the date remains disputed by other scholars. For further bibliography see, for example, BALLAIRA (2002, f.n. 43). A recent contribution to this debate is VENTRELLA (2017).

[5] Theodosius II was emperor from 408 to 450 CE.

[6] He was consul in 485 CE and was killed in 525. This therefore provides a *term. a. q.* for the composition of the three *opuscula*; see BALLAIRA (1989) and MARTINDALE (1980, *sv*. Symmachus 9).

and exercises which prepared pupils for the school of the rhetorician. [7] Other grammatical treatises were the *Institutio de nomine et pronomine et uerbo* and the *Partitiones duodecim uersuum Aeneidos principalium*, [8] this being a grammatical analysis of the first twelve lines of the *Aeneid*. Both the *Institutio* and the *Partitiones* were written after his major work to which his name and fame are particularly linked, the *Ars grammatica*[9] in eighteen books, which was the most important treatise on Latin grammar produced in Antiquity. The *Ars* was composed in the years he held the position of professor at the *auditorium* and published between 526-527. This date is obtained from a number of subscriptions in which Priscian's pupil Flauius Theodorus informs us that he copied the books of the *Ars* in those years. [10]

Besides his activity as a *grammaticus*, Priscian also demonstrated his ability to compose poetry, as it is evidenced by the *Panegyric* of Anastasius and the didactic poem *Periegesis*, a translation based on the Περιήγησις τῆς οἰκουμένης by Dionysius of Alexandria. [11]

Priscian's career extended throughout the reigns of Anastasius (491-518), Justin (518-527) and Justinian (527-565); we do not know until when he taught at the *auditorium*, nor do we know the date of his death. [12] The mention of Priscian by Cassiodorus (c. 490-c. 585/590) in his treatise *De orthographia* is not entirely helpful to see a *terminus post quem* for his death. Cassiodorus wrote it when he was ninety-two, as he made explicit in the preface of the work and referred to Priscian with the words *modernus auctor* (cf. *GL* 7, 147.15) and *doctor nostro tempore Constantinopoli* (cf. *GL* 7, 207.13). The epithet *modernus* used by Cassiodorus is nevertheless interesting because it stands as an acknowledgement of Priscian's work and fame. Cassiodorus might have met Priscian in Constantinople in the years after 540, when

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[7] The three *opuscula* are edited in the *Grammatici Latini* collection but are also more recently edited in PASSALACQUA (1987).

[8] Both works are edited in PASSALACQUA (1999).

[9] I follow DE NONNO (2009) in referring to Priscian's work as *Ars*, instead of as *Institutiones grammaticae*, because it is with that title that it has been transmitted in the manuscripts. *Institutiones grammaticae* was instead used by Hertz in his edition of Priscian in *Grammatici Latini* and became thereafter canonical; he relied on Krehl's edition (1819-20).

[10] A subscription is a closing annotation found in manuscripts which may provide information about the author of the text, the scribe, the time, and place of its composition. Flauius Theodorus left five subscriptions while copying the *Ars*. For the text of the subscriptions, see BALLAIRA (1989, pp. 57-64) and ZETZEL (1981, pp. 220-222); for an account of Theodorus' life and career, see MARTINDALE (1980, *sv*. Theodorus 63).

[11] Dionysius of Alexandria lived in the second century CE during the reign of Hadrian.

[12] PASSALACQUA (2006) says that Priscian "must have been dead in 527, when his pupil Flavius Theodorus finished copying the *Institutiones grammaticae*". This date seems too early at least because the *Institutio* and the *Partitiones* were written after the *Ars*.

he was in the capital studying theology,[13] and acquired part of Priscian's work. Considering also that Cassiodorus referred to a pupil of Priscian, the grammarian Eutyches, for the composition of both his *De orthographia* and the *Institutiones* and labelled him as an *orthographus antiquus* (cf. *Inst.* 1, 30.2), we can appreciate the significance of Priscian's work early on.

Existing scholarly literature

To define the scope and aims of my study of Priscian, it will be useful to look at the existing scholarly literature in certain relevant areas. I will take into consideration contributions in the fields of textual criticism, of the history of ancient education and linguistics, and of cultural history, and especially the research that focuses on the Graeco-Roman grammatical tradition and literary culture in the East between the fifth and sixth century.

In considering the large number of scholarly enquiries into the ancient grammatical tradition, *Guardians of Language* by Robert Kaster (1988) remains a point of reference for anyone wishing to study Latin grammarians. The book sheds light on the status of late grammarians, their social and cultural role in the imperial period, and focuses on aspects of education and transmission of knowledge. Grammarians are seen in a system where cultural distinction was necessary to achieve social and political recognition, and their role in education was most functional within that system because through it "the governing classes of the empire perpetuated and extended themselves" (p. 14). Also, much valuable information for the study of history of education and society is contained in the prosopography which surveys the grammarians known between mid-third and mid-sixth centuries CE.

Very recently, in 2018, the volume *Critics, Compilers and Commentators* by James Zetzel was published providing students of Roman antiquity a new fundamental reference tool which, while it analyses all the different kinds of texts of ancient erudition, complements also Kaster's investigations with a bio-bibliographical guide to the surviving texts, divided into grammars, commentaries and lexica.[14]

A brief but comprehensive survey of Priscian's biographic details is the monograph that appeared in 1989, *Prisciano e i suoi amici*, by Guglielmo Ballaira. In

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[13] See ZETZEL (2018, n. 11).
[14] Zetzel's book was designed to complement Eleanor Dickey's *Ancient Greek Scholarship* (2007), as he himself sets out in the preface.

this work Ballaira gathered and made sense of all the pieces of information about Priscian's life and career at our disposal and constituted a reference work in the debate on Priscian's origin and on the chronology of his works.

Also, the last two decades have witnessed a significant increase of studies which have shed new light on Priscian and his work. While in the past he drew the interest of scholars mainly for the large number of literary quotations of his *Ars*, and had sometimes been considered a "mere compiler" (Percival 1987, p. 72) or a "painstaking expositor of existing knowledge at the stage in which he found it" (Robins 1993, p. 90), recent work has given credit to his contribution to the discipline of ancient grammar.

The renewed attention that modern scholarship has paid to Priscian is certainly the result of a revival of grammatical studies which came to consider ancient technographic texts as depositories of ancient knowledge in a broad sense, able to give an insight into the cultural and social context in which they were produced, so as to promote the study of the history of linguistics and education in late antiquity, and not only because they preserved and transmitted a large number of quotations and were therefore useful to the study of the indirect transmission of the Latin classics.

Until recently, most ancient Latin grammar manuals have been available to scholars only in the edition provided by Teubner between 1855 and 1880 under the general editorship of Heinrich Keil in the monumental *Grammatici Latini* (*GL*) collection. Priscian's works were edited by Hertz and Keil and published between 1855 and 1859 in the second and third volume of *GL*. Modern scholarship has necessitated new editions of grammatical texts because Keil's philological criteria are to some extent outdated; his selection and collation are often incomplete and not always reliable. With respect to studies of Priscian's text tradition, a catalogue of the manuscripts of all the grammatical works of Priscian appeared in 1978 by Passalacqua, followed and complemented by a new work by Ballaira in 1982 which listed also the manuscripts of the *Panegyric* and the *Periegesis*.

From 2001 the publisher Olms-Weidmann launched the series *Collectanea Grammatica Latina* directed by Giuseppe Morelli and Mario de Nonno with the aim of providing a new edition of grammatical texts, with the recension of the texts often based on the analysis of new manuscripts, and a relevant introduction on the history and nature of the works and a detailed commentary. Moreover, some of the volumes of this series include an Italian translation of the ancient texts. This series has proved

to be of great interest for scholars in ancient grammar and history of linguistics who could rely only on the texts edited by Keil.

Scholars of Priscian, while they were provided with a newer edition of Priscian's minor works by Passalacqua (1987; 1999), had to wait until very recently in 2015 for the publication of a new edition of the last part of the eighteenth book of the *Ars* by Michela Rosellini, which was followed in 2017 by a new volume including analysis and comment of this part by Elena Spangenberg Yanes. Rosellini had previously brought the last part of the eighteenth book of the *Ars* to the attention of scholars of Roman grammarians with two contributions in 2010 and 2011 in the journal *Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici*. The two articles explored the circumstances relating to the composition of the bilingual lexicon which completes Priscian's *Ars*, consisting of quotations from classical writers, both Greek and Latin, known as Atticistic lexicon. In particular, Rosellini was interested in examining the history of the text, the structure of the lexicon, the sources used by Priscian and the editorial features of quotations.

It can be useful to remind ourselves briefly of the structure and features of the *Ars*. Its eighteen books are usually divided into two distinct parts depending on which grammatical aspects of language are discussed therein; books 1-16 concern what we call phonetics and morphology, while books 17-18 concern syntax. The last two books of the *Ars* are substantially different from the rest of Priscian's work, and they are unique among the ancient surviving grammars of Latin. Because of this difference between the first sixteen books and the last two, it also happened that Priscian's *Ars* during the Middle Ages circulated in two different ways; on the model of Donatus' grammatical treatises books 1-16 were called *Priscianus maior*, whereas the last two circulated as *Priscianus minor*. [15] These last two books are mostly based on the work of the Greek grammarian Apollonius Dyscolus (second century CE), the Περὶ συντάξεως, and therefore are usually referred to as the *De constructione*. A closer look at the structure of the *De constructione* allows us to distinguish a first section dealing with the syntax of nouns and verbs from the so-called "Atticistic lexicon" which conclude the *Ars*. As mentioned above, this lexicon consists of a long list of syntactic

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[15] Cf. GROUPE ARS GRAMMATICA (2010, p.11). For an overview of Donatus' works, see LAW (2003, pp. 65-80). This denomination corresponds only partially to the two *artes* by Donatus. The subject of the *Priscianus minor* has nothing to do with Donatus' shorter grammar book, which was aimed at beginners and dealt briefly with the different parts of speech.

usages from authors of both languages, and it is known as "Atticistic" because Priscian used a collection of Atticisms for drawing it up, namely phrases and idioms based on the Attic dialect, dating from the second century CE, and built on it a list of Latin usages as a counterpart, which were the result of his activity as a compiler.

It was this bilingual lexicon that particularly drew the attention of scholars in recent years because it lends itself to a variety of research questions which had as objectives to understand how it fits into the general plan of the *Ars*, to recover its sources, and to define its criteria of composition and destination. Rosellini's studies (2010 and 2011) constituted a preliminary step towards the publication of a miscellaneous volume edited by Martorelli in 2014, *Greco antico nell'Occidente carolingio. Frammenti di testi attici nell'*Ars *di Prisciano*, which collected articles of scholars interested in the bilingual lexicon, and specifically in the Greek sources and quotations used by Priscian. Spangenberg Yanes (2017a) investigated the relationships between Priscian's *Atticismi* and the Latin grammatical genre of *idiomata casuum*, and the findings were later included in the commentary (Spangenberg Yanes 2017b) to the edition of the text by Rosellini (2015). This line of research based in Italy has been beneficial to students of ancient grammar and the history of linguistics, as well as to promote studies of ancient education, especially in consideration of the fact that Priscian merged together in his works a twofold tradition of grammatical studies and was a successful representative of a Latin teacher to a mostly Greek-speaking community.

Priscian has an important place in the history of ancient linguistics both because he composed the only existing treatment of syntax within the Latin tradition and because his works became highly influential in the development of language studies during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Priscian's use of Apollonius' work on syntax represented a fortunate stage for the circulation of ancient syntactic theory in the West.

In 1989 Marc Baratin published the comprehensive volume *La naissance de la syntaxe à Rome*, where he defined the process of development of Latin studies on syntax and recognised the role of Priscian as an innovative scholar. Until Baratin's contribution there was no extensive inquiry of traces of a syntactic theory in Roman ancient scholarship. Baratin (1989) had the merit of shedding light on the peculiarity of Roman linguistic analysis which seems to have dealt with syntax only partially in those sections of the *artes* dedicated to the *uitia uirtutesque orationis* and without any

systematic analysis. Baratin focused also on two sections contained in the grammars of Diomedes (*GL* 1, 388.10-395.10) and Charisius (*GL* 1, 262.25- 264.16) dated to the end of the fourth century which dealt with temporal relations between verbs in complex sentences. However, the first Roman work that apparently had syntax as its intended topic was the third part of Varro's *De lingua Latina*, a part which is now lost. Although there was as yet no technical word as "syntax", Varro had expressed his intention of dealing with the combination of words, probably on the basis of Stoic dialectics which was concerned with the nature of language and the logical structure of sentences.[16]

Baratin also explains that Varro's linguistic approach was not followed by further works and research, while grammar studies found their way into numerous *artes* which were of a more practical and pedagogical nature. Remarks of a syntactic nature were found in the sections of the *artes* about the faults and figures of speech, a sphere that concerned more a rhetorical training and education. Eventually, Priscian's adaptation of Apollonius' text was a product of the teaching culture and practice which developed from the first century CE and saw a proliferation of teaching tools in the fourth century, but it was also an innovative choice of subject.

Prior to this comprehensive study of the development of the notion of syntax in the Roman tradition, Baratin had already shown a particular interest in Priscian's *De constructione* in the article *Priscien et la constitution d'une syntaxe latine: Recherches sur le livre XVII des* Institutions Grammaticales (1979), where he pointed out the elements of contact and of originality of Priscian's syntactic theory compared with Apollonius' work.

Apollonius and Priscian represent an inseparable pair in the history of western linguistics because up until Apollonius' work it is difficult for modern scholarship to evaluate the developments in ancient syntactic theory, and Priscian was in turn responsible for circulating this theory in the West (cf. Taylor 1993). Taylor (1993) provides a clear and detailed account of the origin and development of syntax from the domains of Greek philosophy first to (Stoic) logic and dialectic, finishing with the

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[16] The *De lingua Latina* was a work in twenty-five books, composed between 45 to 43 BCE; only books 5 to 10 survive and fragments of the other books. We have a recap of the subject matter of the third part (books 14-25) at the beginning of the eighth book: *ut ea* [*scil. uocabula*] *inter se ratione coniuncta sententiam efferant* (VARR. *L.L.* 8.1). Cf. TAYLOR (1993, pp. 276-278) and ZETZEL (2018, pp. 31-58). For a general overview of the development of the study of language by philosophers, especially Stoics, see also SCHENKEVELD & BARNES (1999).

reception of remarks of a syntactic nature in grammatical texts. In fact, we must not look in grammatical texts for a complete and systematic theory on syntax (subject and predicate were not yet conceptualised for example), but for observations on cases of arrangement of words together.[17]

Attention to the history of Latin grammar and to the part Priscian played in the history of linguistics of Western Europe was also paid by Vivien Law in a substantial body of publications which contribute to our understanding of Priscian's influence on the development of education and on grammatical studies in the Middle Ages. Law's classification of ancient Latin grammars into *Schulgrammatik* and *regulae* types, for example, establishes a typological description of the texts useful not only to medievalists but also to classicists (cf. Law 1987; 1996; 1997; 2003).

In 2009 Baratin, Colombat and Holtz edited the volume published by Brepols *Priscien: transmission et refondation de la grammaire, de l'antiquité aux modernes*, which covered an extensive range of topics from the history of the text to the search for Priscian's philosophical sources.[18]This miscellaneous work collected contributions from many scholars, classical philologists, medievalists, linguists and historians of language, providing the latest findings of their research. It shed new light on aspects of Priscian's historical position as a *grammaticus* in Constantinople, as well as bringing Priscian's poetical works, the *Panegyricus* and the *Periegesis*, to the attention of students. In particular, the *Panegyricus* received a new comment by Guglielmo Ballaira in his contribution *Il* Panegirico *di Prisciano ad Anastasio* (pp. 3-17), after the previous works by Alain Chauvot (1986) and Patricia Coyne (1991). The whole grammatical corpus received attention in this collection, especially regarding the different sources used by Priscian in his works, and their transmission and later reception. It is worth mentioning the renewed interest in the interactions between grammar and philosophy in late antiquity shown in the contributions of Sten Ebbesen, Anneli Luhtala, Alessandro Garcea and Marc Baratin; Aristotelian, Stoic and Platonic ideas are traced in Priscian's grammatical descriptions and notions, and examined in light of Priscian's adaptation of Apollonius's works which consisted mostly of Stoic doctrine. In particular, Luhtala, in the article *Priscian's Philosphy*, examined

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[17] For example, this is the criticism that SLUITER (1994) makes of Baratin's work *La naissance de la syntaxe à Rome*.

[18] For a brief but comprehensive overview of this massive book on Priscian there is the very useful review article KELLY (2011).

Priscian's definitions of the nominal parts of speech, traced parallels with Apollonius' doctrine and showed Priscian's intellectual independence from his source when he resorted to elements from different philosophical schools, especially from the Platonic school. Luhtala's study complemented the investigation she conducted in her previous book *Grammar and Philosophy in Late Antiquity: A Study of Priscian's Sources* (2005), where she first recognised, in the field of linguistic historiography, Platonic elements in Priscian's grammar.

Priscian's monumental work was rightly regarded as a "texte majeur de la culture occidentale, un maillon entre domaine grec et domaine latin, entre Antiquité et monde médiéval" (Baratin 2012, p. 709). This element of conjunction between Antiquity and Middle Ages continues to be a focus of scholars. Franck Cinato, for example, in the volume *Priscien glosé* edited in 2015 by Brepols, shed light on the development of language studies during the Carolingian Renaissance, and dedicated his attention to studying the glosses in Priscian's manuscripts as privileged pieces of evidence of the reception of Priscian's text in the Middle Ages.

With the renewed attention to ancient grammatical texts, much attention has been directed also to the history of education,[19] especially to language teaching and language contact in the eastern half of the empire. From the second century BCE until the sixth century CE much of the Greek-speaking East was under the rule of Latin speakers, and throughout this long period the relationship between Greek and Latin underwent changes and developments which reflected the changes and developments undergone between Roman and Greek elites in the East.

A factor that must be taken into consideration when looking at language teaching and contact in the East in late antiquity is the attitude of elites towards Greek and Latin, which varied significantly between the first centuries of the empire and late antiquity. In his seminal article appeared in 1969, *Aux origines de la civilisation byzantine: langue de culture et langue d'État*, Gilbert Dagron showed the profound ideological change of Greek and Latin in the East between the third and sixth centuries. While in the third century Latin was perceived as "la langue du pouvoir" and Greek "la langue de la culture" by the sixth century the situation had changed and the roles

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[19] Now dated but still influential is the volume *Histoire de l'Éducation dans l' Antiquité* by Marrou (1948), where the Greek and Roman systems of education are paralleled and closely examined, taking into consideration primary and secondary schools, as well as the curriculum in the centres of higher education.

were reversed with the Greek being used in the administration of the State and Latin being also an expression of culture.

The reasons why and the methods with which Latin was learnt and taught in the Greek provinces are the focus of much of recent scholarship. These issues are intertwined with issues of cultural relationship and identity in late antiquity. Dragon's dichotomy *langue de culture et langue d'État* gave scholars a key to interpretation of language use in late antiquity, but, although it is still useful in providing a snapshot of the situation, it does not provide a complete picture of the complexity of the sixth century. Priscian must be looked at, when considering the cultural and linguistic context of sixth century Constantinople, because his works well reflected the particular linguistic and cultural attitude of elites of the capital city. What was the nature of such a comprehensive Latin grammar in a period when knowledge of Latin seemed to weaken? What was the relationship between his work and the other teaching materials produced and used at that time?

In 2008 the proceedings of a conference on ancient education held in Pisa two years earlier were published in the volume *Aspetti della scuola nel mondo romano* by Franco Bellardi and Rolando Ferri. Bruno Rochette contributed to these proceedings with the paper *L'enseignement du latin comme L² dans la* Pars Orientis *de l'Empire romain: les* Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana. Rochette's contribution had the merit of shedding light on the pieces of evidence we have of the teaching and learning of Latin in the East,[20] especially on a particular kind of texts whose origins probably date between the second and fourth centuries and which are referred to as *hermeneumata*, namely bilingual texts such as short fables, maxims, vocabulary checklists, used by Greek speakers to learn Latin morphology, vocabulary and phraseology. A subgroup of these are called *colloquia*, viz. fictional dialogic texts based on everyday life. These texts have been transmitted to us mostly in medieval manuscripts, but many fragments are also transmitted in papyri. These materials are called *Pseudodositheana* because in some manuscripts they are attached to the bilingual grammar of Dositheus.

Eleanor Dickey has recently published various contributions to this specific topic, and in general to the different teaching materials produced in Antiquity, their compilation and use in a largely Greek-speaking word. Dickey's work focuses on the

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[20] Rochette has dedicated a great deal of effort to research the issues of Latin teaching and of the transmission of Latin texts in the East, see for example ROCHETTE (2015, 2019).

colloquia of the *Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana* (Dickey 2012-2015; 2016) and provides scholars with a new edition of the text, translation, and a comment of the six *colloquia* that we know of. These bilingual materials are evidence of the fruitful relationship between the Greek and Roman teaching traditions, and of the efforts of teachers to produce the tools they needed in their profession. Dickey insists on the "utilitarian enterprise" of learning Latin in the East, namely for its use in the army, in the administration of the State and in practising Roman law, and connects the loss of utility of Latin in the sixth century with the actual loss of the language in the East. However, the use of these ancient texts continued long after the sixth century; they were preserved, in the forms we have them, in the medieval West, where they became useful to learn Greek.

Many pieces of evidence of Latin-learning materials have come to us on papyri found in Egypt. Egypt is for students of ancient education a vast repository of data on the school life in this province of the empire which can be extended, *mutatis mutandis*, also to the rest of the East. The study of this repository of evidence complements the more traditional study of literary sources in the attempt to describe and understand the world of ancient education. Raffaella Cribiore dedicated part of her specialist research to the study of the ancient curriculum and applied her expertise as a papyrologist to establish a corpus of school exercises from the first stages of language learning up to the exercises used during the rhetorical training. These materials were often characterised by the presence of columnar translations of Latin passages into Greek, sometimes only of Greek transliterations or glosses. In 1996, Cribiore published the volume *Writing, Teachers and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, followed in 2001 by the book *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*, both of which offer an insight into the fragmented and, at the same time, particularly uniform and conservative world of ancient education.

In 2015, Maria Chiara Scappaticcio published the comprehensive volume Artes grammaticae *in frammenti: i testi grammaticali latini e bilingui greco-latini su papiro* which collects and analyses all the known Latin and bilingual grammatical texts on papyrus, and provides scholars with another contribution to interpreting the Latin-Greek language contact in the Greek East. Very useful is the overview of the different teaching tools produced in the East, *artes*, glossaries and *colloquia*.

In 2016, Rolando Ferri and Anna Zago edited the miscellaneous book *The Latin of the Grammarians* which collected contributions that focused on Roman

grammarians from a variety of areas; the interest of scholars went from Varro until the grammatical teaching between the seventh and ninth centuries.

The progress made in this field of enquiry, while it betters our understanding of the ancient curriculum, brings also new insight to the issue of linguistic co-existence in the East. The last few decades have been fruitful in this regard. Scholars have been looking at the main features of Graeco-Latin bilingualism among eastern elites, especially the diffusion of Latin, the domains of Latin knowledge, and also the mutual influences of Greek and Latin, mainly on vocabulary. The works of Frédérique Biville go in this direction; among many contributions to the understanding of a hybrid Graeco-Latin language it is worth mentioning the two volumes Biville (1990; 1995), *Les emprunts du latin au grec. Approche phonétique*, and Biville (2002), *The Graeco-Romans and Graeco-latin: A Terminological Framework for Cases of Bilingualism*.

In connection with this line of enquiry Biville also investigated the nature of Priscian's work and the Greek substratum from which it developed. Two papers appeared one soon after the other with the intent of bringing to light the process of transmission of Greek grammatical theories and terminology into Latin which can be observed in the works of Priscian: *Les* Institutions *de Priscien, une grammaire et une culture bilingues* (2008), and *Le latin expliqué par le grec: les* Institutions *de Priscien* (2009). In these contributions Biville stressed the fact that Priscian's *Ars* conveyed a twofold ancient scholarship which Priscian tended to merge. Priscian's discussions were therefore embedded in a Graeco-Latin cultural and linguistic framework and reflected the level of Priscian's dependence on and imitation of Greek grammatical theories.

Research on the issues of Graeco-Latin bilingualism was carried out also by Bruno Rochette in different publications. In 1997, he published the volume *Le latin dans le monde grec. Recherches sur la diffusion de la langue et des lettres latines dans les provinces hellénophones de l'Empire romain*; Rochette offered an overview of Greek and Latin language contact, taking into consideration Greek attitudes to Latin. Once again, the analysis of the evidence for the teaching of Latin in the eastern provinces constitutes a valuable support to the understanding of the cultural background of late antiquity. Rochette's (2010) contribution to the *Companion to the Ancient Greek Language* by Blackwell Publishing, *Greek and Latin Bilingualism*, provides students of ancient linguistics and grammar with a brief account of the latest developments in the study of bilingualism, with a focus on the notions of linguistic

interference, borrowing, code-switching. This work also contains an essential bibliography for further reference.

A book that marked an important stage in the study of bilingualism and language contact in antiquity is Adams (2003), *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*. Adams' sociolinguistic approach to bilingualism focused not only on literary documents, but also on non-literary evidence such as inscriptions, ostraca, private correspondence on papyri, school exercises, and therefore offers a more comprehensive understanding of language use in antiquity. Adams' study takes into consideration the period which goes from the Republican age to the fourth/fifth century CE; the analysis of the evidence carried out by Adams outlines the complexity of the process of cultural integration throughout antiquity, and helps to delineate issues of cultural identity in late antiquity.

An interesting and fruitful approach to the study of bilingualism and cultural identity was taken by Fergus Millar. As an historian, Millar was able to investigate the issue of social and cultural integration in the East in the fifth and sixth centuries by looking in particular at two historical documents: imperial communications addressed to high officials or to the Senate, usually in form of letters, and the acts of church councils.[21] The study of these pieces of evidence reveals the interplay of language, politics, religion and culture. In the book of 2006, *A Greek Roman Empire*, Millar came up with the significant description of the eastern Roman empire of the fifth century as a "Greek Empire"; this was the time in which Theodosius II ruled over the East, between 408 and 450 CE. While the ideology of imperial legislation, all issued in Latin, pursued a formal unity of the Roman Empire, the administrative structure of the Empire and its functioning was divided into two halves; in the East the interaction between the central authority and the subjects of the Empire was in Greek. Millar offered a picture of how in the fifth century Greek was in the East the language used to convey all sorts of communication with the majority of population and was also the language of the Church. On the other hand, Latin was indispensable to anyone wishing to operate within the administration of the State, but was not current; knowledge of Latin was a qualification needed for the holding of public office, but the ordinary school curriculum did not produce an assured mastery of Latin, as was also evidenced

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[21] Millar conducted his research using all sorts of evidence; imperial legislation and the *Acta conciliorum* were a particular focus of his study, but inscriptions and literary accounts were also taken into consideration; see, for example, MILLAR (1999).

by the *Acta conciliorum*, in which eastern bishops needed translations of anything issued in Latin (Millar 2006).

A further study by Millar of the issue of identity and language in the documents of church councils is: *Linguistic Co-Existence in Constantinople: Greek and Latin (and Syriac) in the Acts of the Synod of 536 CE*, published in 2009.

Research on the social and cultural background of the eastern empire has proved to be a prolific field of enquiry. Late antiquity was a period of transition, marked by political, cultural, and religious changes which must be looked at by considering the two halves of the Empire. In the East, what can be said for the fifth century cannot always be applied to the sixth century, since there were substantial developments in the imperial policies and religious matters of the time which convey a different picture of society.

Recent studies which focus on the sixth century, in particular on cultural history and on issue of Roman identity, include Averil Cameron's paper *Old and New Rome: Roman Studies in Sixth-Century Constantinople* which appeared in 2009 as a contribution to the volume edited by Philip Rousseau and Manolis Papoutsakis, *Transformations of Late Antiquity. Essays for Peter Brown*, which aimed to assess the literary culture in Constantinople during the reign of Justinian. The evaluation of the literary activities of the time and the role of imperial policies in supporting them has seen some disagreements among scholars. Evidence seems to suggest that there was a clear interest in Latin and in the Roman past in sixth-century Constantinople; several figures produced works either in Greek or Latin that reflected the popularity of Roman learning, as for example John Lydus, Peter the Patrician, Malalas, Marcellinus, and Priscian. Nevertheless, scholars do not always agree on the possibility of assessing the elements of continuity and rupture with the classical past, while further study of the significance of the traces of Roman culture in sixth-century Constantinople would be welcome.[22]

Another collection of articles concerned with transformations of late antiquity is the volume edited in 2000 by Stephen Mitchell and Geoffrey Greatrex, *Ethnicity and Culture in Late Antiquity*. Two papers from this volume are of particular interest because they focus on the cultural change in the east in the sixth century. *Literary*

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[22] Further works useful to the interpretation of the literary culture in the Justinian's era are RAPP (2005), CROKE (2001), MAAS (1992), CAVALLO (1978) and MOMIGLIANO (1958).

Culture in the Reign of Anastasius I by Fiona Nicks explores the cultural milieu of Constantinople under the reign of Anastasius;[23] there is evidence that between the end of the fifth century and the first two decades of the sixth century literary culture was promoted with the imperial support. Priscian was a key figure at the imperial court and while his works are evidence of the existence of a reception of Latin works in sixth century Constantinople and preserved the classical cultural tradition, he also embodied the cultural and literary changes that the Christian ideology brought. The paper *Roman Identity in the Sixth Century* by Greatrex examines Roman perceptions of themselves and points out how fluid the notion of Roman identity was at that time, depending on many different social and cultural factors, not least the adherence to Chalcedonian Christianity and loyalty to the emperor.

The linguistic and literary milieu of Constantinople in late antiquity remains an active field of research because it needs systematisation and interpretation. Evidence comes from a number of fields: literature, grammar, law, religion, and consists of different forms: palaeographic, epigraphic and papyrological. In this regard, I mention the miscellaneous volume published in 2019 by Brepols in the *Corpus Christianorum* series, *Latin in Byzantium I*, and edited by Alessandro Garcea, Michela Rosellini and Luigi Silvano, where the focus is, once again, on the contexts in which Latin was used and on the transmission of Latin texts between the fourth and the ninth centuries.

Together with a renewed interest in Priscian's texts and theories, some effort has been dedicated in the last two decades to provide a translation of Priscian's *Ars* into a modern language, since its text has only been available to researchers in Latin. The research group known as *Groupe Ars Grammatica* is devoted to this task in French,[24] while translations of some books are available in German by Schönberger[25] and in Spanish by Harto Trujillo.[26]

In this literary survey I have taken into consideration scholarly contributions in the fields of textual criticism, of the history of ancient education and linguistics, and of cultural history, and especially the research that focuses on the Graeco-Roman

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[23] A well-documented account of the background to and the events of Anastasius' reign is HAARER (2006).

[24] In 2010 the translation of the seventeenth book of the *Ars* was published; there followed in 2013 books 14-16.

[25] Book 14 was published in 2008; there followed in 2009 books 12-13, and in 2010 books 16-17.

[26] The translation of books 17-18 and the prefatory letter to the *Ars* was published in 2014.

grammatical tradition and literary culture in the East between the fifth and sixth century.

My study

As the literature review above shows, the interest in grammatical studies and particularly in Priscian has been increasing in the last decades. Late antiquity has proved to be a prolific field of enquiry with contributions from different disciplines, which have revealed a variety of trends and approaches. Nonetheless, if we consider the importance of Priscian's grammatical theories and teaching in assessing the linguistic and cultural background of sixth-century Constantinople, there are gaps that this thesis aims to address. I shall pull together different strands of research by merging a philological reading of Priscian's text with the findings of the history of ancient education and cultural history.

While there has been much focus on Priscian's place in the history of western linguistic tradition, with studies on the exceptionality of his syntactic discussions within the ancient world (Baratin 1979; 1989, Taylor 1993, De Nonno 2009), and his role in influencing the grammatical theories during the Middle Ages (Persival 1987, Law 1987; 1997; 2003, Cinato 2015), there has not been enough emphasis on Priscian's work as the product of the cultural mixture that marked the scene of Constantinople at the beginning of the sixth century. Priscian's work, especially the treateses dedicated to the western aristocrat Symmachus, has been appreciated because of its importance in defining the cultural and political relationships between West and East (Ballaira 1989), but more should be said about its importance in relation to its eastern context. My study therefore aims at recasting Priscian in his eastern setting so that it will provide scholars with an evaluation of Priscian's technographic work as a depository of eastern cultural issues and concerns.

Modern scholarship has also focused on the Greek grammatical and philosophical influences on Priscian' grammatical theories (Biville 2008; 2009, Luhtala 2005). The latest philological works by Rosellini (2015) and Spangenberg Yanes (2017b), together with contributions that examine sources, composition and destination of Priscian's *Ars* (Martorelli 2014) shed new light on Priscian's activity as *grammaticus*, but lack attention to the value that Priscian's work has in assessing the culture of late antiquity, and to the Graeco-Roman community which Priscian addressed. In this regard, studies such as those by Mango (1981), Miles (1999),

Greatrex (2000), Rapp (2005), Hareer (2006), Cameron, Av. (2009) and Cameron, Al. (2016), while they give an insight into the cultural milieu of sixth-century Constantinople, they do not address in detail the case of Priscian in their attempt to define Roman identity. It is my belief that Priscian's grammatical work can constitute a valuable contribution to the definition of cultural identities in the sixth century, and therefore I will particularly focus on the interplay between linguistics and the ideology of a Graeco-Roman cultural narrative, with the aim of understanding better the issue of self-definition of elites in late antiquity, and the role of ancient education and grammatical studies in shaping their world, adopting an approach similar to that of students of the Second Sophistic. This will also hopefully offer a fresh impetus to the study of ancient linguistic theories of language contact (Pascucci 1979, Dubuisson 1984, De Paolis 2015) which has so far not considered Priscian's work in relation to such theories. Some contributions that focus more generally on bilingualism in late antiquity (Biville 1990; 1995; 2002, Adams 2003, Rochette 1997; 2010) relate to issues of language contact but do not evaluate the importance of the knowledge of Greek and Latin for the self-perception of elites and for the definition of their linguistic identity.[27]

My study aims at filling another gap of modern research. The part Priscian played in the history of ancient education is well-established. A great deal of research has examined the issue of Latin learning in the East, focusing on the practical needs of Latin in the bureaucracy, in the army and in composing legal documents (Millar 1999, Lenoble, Swiggers & Wouters 2000, Rochette 2015, Dickey 2015b; 2016). In considering the world of the eastern elites, my study will also look at the function of Latin in the context of late antiquity beyond its practical utility.

In general, modern scholars have been attracted to the study of teaching and learning of Latin in the East following two main routes strictly interconnected: the analysis of evidence from Graeco-Roman Egypt (Cribiore 1996; 2001, Scappaticcio 2015), and the broader study of ancient education in the East especially of those bilingual teaching materials that are known as *hermeneumata* (Rochette 2008, Dickey 2010; 2012-15; 2015a; 2015b; 2016). Emphasis has been placed on the perpetuation of ancient teaching practices and methods from the third to the sixth centuries, and

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[27] Language is a factor responsible for building the sense of belonging to a community, and in turn the sense of belonging to a community shapes the attitude of members towards their language.

Priscian has been noted as the last influential representative of this tradition (Kaster 1988, Zetzel 2018). I aim to shed further light on the formation of bilingual tools for Latin learning and to investigate to what extent the Greek grammatical substratum influenced the teaching of Latin. This will be a contribution to the advancement of the understanding of Priscian's teaching method and aims in the context of early sixth-century Constantinople. I will consider Priscian's grammatical work, and focus on the *De constructione*, because it offers the opportunity to analyse linguistically and culturally the intertwining of Greek and Roman scholarship on the subject.

Moreover, the large number of literary quotations transmitted by Priscian has always drawn the attention of researchers (Jocelyn 1967, De Nonno 1990, Rosellini 2011, Sonnino 2014, Valente 2014) interested in the transmission of the text of ancient authors and in Priscian's sources, while no systematic attention has been given to the idioms and *exempla ficta* contained in the *Ars*. In light of this, the present study aims at providing a discussion on the function quotations, idioms and *exempla ficta* had in building identity for the elite group of Constantinople, and at providing therefore an evaluation of Priscian's work as not only transmitting grammatical knowledge, but also cultural knowledge for that audience, thereby being a depository of concerns and issues that were shared by the local Graeco-Roman society. Priscian's *Ars* has been so far overlooked by modern scholars as a useful means to examine to what extent the cultural changes of sixth-century Constantinople can be reconstructed from it. In fact, in this regard, Priscian did not receive the attention that John Lydus revieved for example (Maas 1992, Dmitriev 2010; 2018), except for its *Panegyric* to Anastasius (Chauvot 1986, Coyne 1991, Nicks 2000, Ballaira 2009).

By looking more in detail at the chapters that make up this thesis, the first chapter serves as an introduction to the world in which Priscian lived and worked. It will be useful to my research to outline and discuss some of the political, linguistic and cultural features that characterised the eastern empire between the fourth and sixth centuries, so as to understand the nature of the relationship between Greek and Roman culture in Priscian's time. I will also consider the rhetoric of Priscian's preface to his *Ars* with the aim of defining the Graeco-Roman narrative which underlies his work. This will be useful to understand both the nature of Priscian's project of transferring Greek knowledge into Latin and the cultural assumptions of Priscian's audience.

The second chapter examines how Priscian engaged with his Greek sources in the composition of the *De constructione* with the aim of defining his role of

"translator" of Greek knowledge into Latin. My study will consider the relationship between Priscian and Apollonius through the reading of the metalanguage that forms Priscian's argumentation. We will be able to understand what enabled Priscian to transfer into Latin a syntax of Greek and to what extent his approach to Latin grammar was shaped by his source text.

Moving from the analysis of the relationship between Priscian's and Apollonius' texts carried out in the second chapter, the third chapter aims at giving an insight into the wider pedagogical framework of late antiquity in the East. I will look at how Priscian's text defines his readers and at the nature of the grammatical instruction addressed to them, so as to form an idea of the representation of ancient elites, and to better our understanding of the teaching of Latin in the East.

The fourth chapter focuses on Priscian's conception of syntax, and in particular looks at how Priscian interpreted syntactic constructions. The chapter aims to understand the significance of the large number of literary quotations contained in the *Ars*, in the hope that this will shed light on the part played by literary Latin in defining the linguistic framework of the elites.

The fifth chapter will provide a further insight into the cultural framework of the elites of sixth century. To do so, I will consider the use and function of a series of invented examples (*exempla ficta*) which enrich Priscian's argumentation in the *De constructione*. While modern scholarship has considered *exempla ficta* as descriptions of grammatical rules (Munzi 2011), my study aims at assessing them as a means for transmitting cultural knowledge.

CHAPTER 1

A Graeco-Roman World

1.1 **Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to place better Priscian and his *Ars* within the Latin grammatical tradition and the cultural horizons of early sixth-century Constantinople. Priscian was an emblematic figure of this period of transition which concerned political, linguistic, and religious matters.

This chapter also aims to introduce the ancient narrative of a Graeco-Roman cultural pair in the context of late antiquity, and to discuss it in the light of Priscian's claims at the beginning of his *Ars*.

In order to understand better the role played by Priscian as a *grammaticus* in Constantinople at the beginning of the sixth century, it will be useful to outline first the historical and socio-cultural background of the eastern empire in late antiquity, and to focus on the relationship and integration between Greek and Roman traditions, and on the circumstances concerning the diffusion of Latin into a predominantly Greek-speaking world.

Moreover, in order to define Priscian's place in the history of grammatical studies and his contribution to Latin grammatical thought and teaching, it will be worth retracing the developments of the grammatical science by focusing especially on the composition of Latin *artes* from the fourth century, and on the practice of teaching Latin in the East to a mostly Greek-speaking audience. In this way, it will be possible to form an idea of the issues around Priscian's specific context and project, and to account for the forms Priscian's work is cast in.

1.2 **The East in late antiquity: a historical and cultural overview**

Defining the world in which Priscian lived and worked is not an easy task; even the term used to refer to this world is not without ambiguity. Modern scholarship has undertaken different approaches to the study of the final centuries of classical antiquity. The term "late antiquity" itself is generally used in historical, literary, religious, artistic studies to refer to a period whose chronological span varies from one scholar to another. It is debatable which point in time defines the transition from the classical world to late antiquity, and also from late antiquity to the Middle Ages.

The chronological boundaries of late antiquity are chosen by scholars depending on whether a political, cultural, economic, religious or geographical perspective is taken to interpret this period, and so with the terms "the later Roman Empire", "the early Byzantine Age" or "the early Middle Ages"; debates among historians are ongoing. In a broader conception, late antiquity spans from the end of the third century until the beginning of the ninth century, namely the period from Diocletian to Charlemagne,[28] but in relation to Latin philology in the East it is often considered to end with the death of Justinian (565 CE) when the knowledge and use of Latin among the elites seems to have completely faded. Moreover, if we consider the history of the East, along with the periodisation of late antiquity scholars have the choice to refer to the capital city of the eastern empire either as Constantinople or Byzantium.

One of the aspects that characterises the nature of the relationship between Greek and Roman culture in the east from the fourth century is the diffusion and use of Latin in the eastern provinces. I am going to start my overview of the culture of the period from the history of language use.

Rochette (2008) distinguishes two periods in the history of the use of languages in the eastern part of the Roman empire. Before the end of the third century, Greek was generally used, not only among the population, but also in official documents and communications, except in the Roman colonies where Latin was used predominantly. After the end of the third, and the beginning of the fourth century, the use of Latin spread considerably in the East. This is evidenced in part by the surge of Latin inscriptions and by the presence of Latinisms on Greek papyri (cf. Dickey 2003).

To make sense of this change, it must be noted that, at the end of the third century, Diocletian promoted an increased use of Latin in the East, as a part of his imperial ideology and his ambitions to enforce Roman authority in all provinces. Notably, imperial edicts were published and circulated in Latin for use by provincial governors and officials, even though, to be understood by most of the population, they had to be translated into Greek.

The administration of provinces required a considerable production of written material of all sorts like letters, imperial responses to private petitions, legal rulings,

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[28] For a brief overview of modern scholarship on the subject, see INGLEBERT (2012), MITCHELL (2015, pp. 5-11) and CAMERON (2016).

which all needed a knowledge of Latin, because most of these communications were produced in Latin.[29] Notably, during this time, there were two first attempts of codification of Roman law in Latin by collecting this material, namely the Gregorian and the Hermogenian codes, as a way to ensure a unified and systematic application of imperial will across the entire empire.[30]

Indeed, to practise Roman law, it was necessary to have a knowledge of Latin; it was for this reason that from the third century elite members of the Greek provinces began to access to law schools, with the most famous centre of legal studies in the East being at Beirut (cf. Millar 1999). Court judgments were delivered in Latin,[31] but of course, it is worth noting that Greek was still being used to a certain extent during court proceedings this time, although Latin was necessary for the procedural elements (Millar 2009, p. 93).

Furthermore, Latin was also the official language of the Roman army (though members often spoke to one another in Greek). As such, a knowledge of Latin was beneficial both to those in the army and to those who had interactions with the army (Dickey 2016). It was by imposition of Roman law and, by presence of the imperial army, that Rome exercised its control over the East.

Having regard to the above, we observe also that, as a result of the need of Latin for a career in the imperial bureaucracy, or a legal career, or to aspire to leadership positions in the provinces, from this period there was an increase in the study of Latin among elites in the East. As a result, from the third century there developed new teaching tools, bilingual glossaries, grammars, and commentaries to allow Greek speakers to master the basics of Latin (cf. Rochette 2008). It is understood that Latin was learnt as a foreign language, since few inhabitants of the East were familiar with it and was learnt primarily for practical purposes.

We observe also that all the legal and administrative material which was produced by the central government needed to be translated into Greek when transmitted to Greek cities and officials of the provinces. Greek was the language in which the content of the imperial will reached the people. Internal documents containing lines of policy or legal procedures were written in Latin, but

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[29] For an analysis of the administrative and legal material produced by the imperial regime during the Tetrarchy and, more in general, of the nature of imperial rule, see CORCORAN (1996).

[30] For a study of the composition and publication of these two legal works and of the role of Diocletian in consolidating imperial authority, see CORCORAN (2012).

[31] *Cod. Just.* 7, 45.12 in FRIER (2016, pp. 1924-25). See also ROCHETTE (1997, pp. 109-110).

communications with the outside were mostly given in Greek. We assume therefore that there was a large number of officials who were in charge of communications and needed to master both Greek and Latin. We will focus on the education system which developed in the East from the end of the third century and flourished in the fourth and fifth centuries later in this chapter.

In considering the developments of the relationship between West and East, at the beginning of the fifth century the western and eastern parts of the Roman Empire began to take separate paths, both politically and culturally. When Theodosius I died in 395, his sons Honorius and Arcadius took independent control over the two halves of the empire. Honorius ruled from Italy in the West until his death in 423, while Arcadius ruled from Constantinople in the East until his premature death in 408. In view of this, the Empire has been understood as almost a pair of twin empires at this time (Millar 2006).

Theodosius II was only seven years old when he succeeded his father Arcadius on the eastern throne in 408. His long reign, until 450, was characterised by a relatively stable period in terms of a reduction in military threats at the borders, and by the consolidation and thriving of the imperial bureaucracy; Theodosius II was concerned more with matters of internal politics and religion than, for example, leading troops against usurpers or enemies at the frontiers, matters which were instead left to his generals. The emperor permanently resided at Constantinople surrounded by a court of political and military figures, who were influential in shaping and implementing imperial policies (cf. Mitchell 2015).

It is worth briefly describing the main components of the imperial entourage in late antiquity, to form a picture of the variety of people who needed a knowledge of both Greek and Latin. The imperial court was a place organised in hierarchical structure and a place of exceptional social mobility. The persons who were called to hold the top positions at the court did not belong necessarily to the highest social classes at birth, but this was a status they could aspire to.[32] Emerging elites competed to gain imperial protection, prominence and respectability within the court, and aimed therefore to enhance their prestige and political influence. Between the fifth and sixth centuries the structure of the court and administration remained almost unchanged.

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[32] For an overview of the features of the imperial courts in late antiquity, see MCCORMICK (2001). For a description of the administrative structures of the late empire, see BARNISH, LEE & WHITBY (2001).

The emperor was surrounded by the members of the *cubiculum*, his household, consisting of personal servants and confidants, among whom eunuchs were very influential (McCormick 2001), and by a corps of civilian and military officials. Within this imperial entourage, the top offices were held by the *comes sacrarum largitionum*, namely the count responsible for collecting the revenues, and by the *comes rerum priuatarum*, who was responsible for administering imperial estates. A very important political function was entrusted to the *magister officiorum*, who was in control of the many departments (*scrinia*) of imperial administration. Another important job was entrusted to the *quaestor* of the sacred palace;[33] he was required to have a knowledge of legal matters and oversaw the drafting of documents on behalf of the emperor and the transmission of petitions to him. The major link between the central and the territorial administration was the office of praetorian prefects. At the beginning of the fifth century, in the eastern empire, two prefectures were created, *Illyricum* and *Oriens*. The praetorian prefects did not command the praetorian guard as it was in the early empire, and developed instead civil powers.[34] In their prefectures they were imperial deputies, with civil and judicial functions; for example, they oversaw the systems of taxation and communications, had general supervision of public order, and had therefore the right to issue edicts to implement their policies in these areas (cf. Barnish, Lee & Whitby 2001). The praetorian prefect of *Oriens* especially enjoyed great prestige and honours. The military competencies which were previously in the hands of the praetorian prefect were given to the *magister militum*.[35]

In addition to the higher posts, the imperial and provincial administration consisted of many departments filled with personnel carrying numerous duties and essential for the practical functioning of the offices. Constantinople attracted men from throughout the empire in search for a career and economic stability, who could find

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[33] The office of *quaestor sacri palatii* was created by Constantine and was concerned with legal matters. The *quaestor sacri palatii* was the highest civil functionary in each half of the empire (see FRIER 2016, p. 3079). Among the holders of the office of *quaestor* there were high-profile figures of lawyers such as Proclus, who held office between 522 and 526 (see MARTINDALE 1980, *sv.* Proclus 5), and Tribonianus (see MARTINDALE 1992, *sv.* Tribonianus 1), *quaestor* between 529 and 532, who was member of the commission that drafted the *Codex Iustinianus* in 528 and 529. John Lydus (c. 490-560) calls Proclus ὁ δικαιότατος, and Tribonianus ὁ πολυμαθέστατος, both of whom adorned the State (τὴν πολιτείαν ἐκόσμησαν) in their capacity of κυαίστωρες (see LYD. *Mag.* 3, 20).
[34] It was Constantine who disbanded the praetorian guard in 312 CE (see *New Pauly*, *sv.* Praefectus praetorio B).
[35] See *New Pauly*, *sv.* Magister militum.

themselves in competition for positions of power (see Millar 2006, pp. 192-234).[36] It is worth remembering that those who could aspire to enter the imperial entourage were not only the members of the elite, but also members from lower classes; eunuchs, for example, were often slaves or freedmen (see Barnish, Lee & Whitby 2001) and some of them enjoyed decisive influence on the emperor, as for example the eunuch Chrysaphius on Theodosius II. In the army, regular soldiers could advance to the rank of *magister militum*; moreover, non-Roman troops were recruited from the fourth century and functioned as ethnic contingents of Goths, Franks, Armenians, Isaurians among others (Whitby 2001).

From a linguistic point of view, the reign of Theodosius II marked a more widespread use of Greek in place of Latin in official communications and in practices that were previously reserved for Latin (cf. Feissel 2010); Greek judges were authorised, for example, to give sentences in Greek. It is also worth noting that Theodosius' praetorian prefect, Cyrus of Panopolis,[37] who held the office between 439 and 441, began to issue his decrees in Greek (Nicks 2000). Another relevant example of how Greek was used in place of Latin in the East relates to will writing. Although wills were often drawn up in Greek, Latin was the only officially accepted language that wills could be drawn up in.[38] However, from 439, under Theodosius II, wills could legitimately be rendered in Greek.[39] Even in law schools texts and commentaries in Greek were required to facilitate learning; Patricius, for example, professor at the law school of Beirut, is known to have composed commentaries on the imperial laws.[40] In view of this, this period under Theodosius II has been understood to mark a transformation of the eastern half of the empire into a Greek Roman Empire (Millar 2006).

However, despite the increased use of Greek during this period by all levels of the administration and by authorities, Latin still retained its position for the most part as the language of written legislation in the East, or better, it remained the language of codification. This is evidenced by the Latin *Codex Theodosianus*, assembled between

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[36] For a reflection on tensions and power struggles within the court of Theodosius II, see also CAMERON (1982).
[37] See MARTINDALE (1980, *sv.* Cyrus 7).
[38] This law was expressed in the second century CE by the jurist Gaius in his *Institutiones* (2, 281: *item legata Graece scripta non ualent*).
[39] The emperor Theodosius II promulgated in 439 CE a decree which allowed the use of Greek in wills; for reference see FRIER (2016, p. 1515).
[40] For a detailed presentation of law schools in late antiquity, see LIEBS (2001, pp. 253-255)

429 and 438 CE, which was commissioned by Theodosius II and consisted of a collection, in sixteen books, of imperial legislation from the time of Constantine. This *Codex* was published in Latin in both parts of the empire and therefore existed as an expression of the legal and constitutional unity between the East and the West (see Liebs 2001, p. 244-247). However, although the imperial ideology behind this project of codification aimed to produce a work of general validity and application in both parts of the empire, East and West followed independent paths. Not only was it not practicable to extend laws that addressed regional and provincial issues to the whole empire, but also it would soon be clear that there would be no need to communicate the legislation promulgated in one half of the empire to the other (cf. Millar 2006, p. 1).

In view of this need for Latin in the codification of Roman law, during the fifth century a knowledge of Latin was still regarded as necessary for elites, as demonstrated by Theodosius II's founding of the *auditorium* by edict in 425. In this edict, Theodosius granted a special status to a group of chosen teachers to teach only in the Capitol (*in Capitolio tantum docere praecepti sunt*), and precluded unfair competition by those who claimed to be professors (*usurpantes sibi nomina magistrorum*) and who attempted to collect pupils for themselves from public schools and rooms (*in publicis magistrationibus cellulisque*).[41]

The *auditorium* was established as a leading and distinguished facility where pupils could acquire an education preparing them for a career in the administration of the State. In addition to Roman law and Greek philosophy, pupils could receive a grammatical and rhetorical education in both Latin and Greek. Notably, the imperial edict of 425, in relation to liberal studies at the *auditorium,* required the appointment of teachers distinguished by their *Romanae eloquentiae doctrina* and *facundia Graecitatis*.[42] It is therefore clear how the teaching of both Latin and Greek grammar was sponsored at the highest level in Constantinople at this time.

Modern scholars usually refer to the *auditorium* as a "university", however, on further inspection, it seems inappropriate to compare the *auditorium* to today's system of tertiary education.[43] The *auditorium* was a secondary level of schooling that included the study of the liberal arts which, in Greek, was known as ἐγκύκλιος

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[41] See *Cod. Theod.* 14, 9.3 = *Cod. Just.* 11, 19 in FRIER (2016, pp. 2687-89).
[42] See *Cod. Theod.* 14, 9.3 = *Cod. Just.* 11, 19.2.
[43] For example, MANGO (1980) speaks of the *auditorium* as a State University.

παιδεία.[44] As suggested by Wilson (1983, p.50) "it is safer to assume that there was one privileged secondary school [*auditorium*], in which intelligent masters and pupils would sometimes engage in advanced study". It is therefore noteworthy that the State attempted to regulate education in this way in this period.

In his study, Millar (2006) concluded that, in the fifth century, "those who entered the public service, whether civilian or military, must either have learned Latin as part of their normal education, or must have sought a special training in Latin" (p. 90). However, in considering the domain of the Church, it appears that there was no such requirement for educated men to have a knowledge in Latin during this time; in fact, Greek appears to have been used much more commonly in ecclesiastical spheres, as of course was the case before Theodosius II. It is worth having a look at the use of Greek in the Church in this period because of the large amount of evidence available for the fifth century.

As stated above, Theodosius II showed a great deal of concern in religion and matters of orthodoxy during his reign, as evidenced by the convocation of two ecumenical councils in Ephesus (the first in 431, and the second in 449) during his lifetime, and a third held in Chalcedon (in 451) just one year after his death. The proceedings of these three councils have been passed down to us through medieval manuscripts in the form of the *Acta*, which include not only transcriptions of words spoken during the councils and written subscriptions of bishops, but also selections of other contemporary documents such as imperial and episcopal communications and homilies. As such, the *Acta* constitute the primary body of evidence that we have of these three councils.[45]

These *Acta* are very insightful as they attest to a very widespread use of Greek amongst the elite of the Church at this time, and yet a lesser understanding of Latin. Indeed, the *Acta* show that the above-noted ecumenical councils were held in Greek with only occasional contributions in Latin (including papal letters from Rome), Coptic and Syriac. These interventions were however translated into Greek during the councils so that they could be understood by all participants and recorded in Greek (Millar 2006). This is significant as it shows that the majority of bishops from across the eastern empire could not understand Latin and had to rely on translations into

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[44] For a brief overview of the education system in Constantinople, see MARKOPOULOS (2008).
[45] The edition of the texts of the *Acta* was produced by Eduard Schwartz in the series *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum* from 1914 to 1940 by De Gruyter.

Greek. Of course, this does point to the need for bilingual ecclesiastical officials to carry out these translations at these councils – however, such a knowledge was not necessary for an ecclesiastical career. From Millar's (2006) in-depth analysis of these *Acta*, we learn that only two bishops from Theodosius' empire who attended these councils spoke in Latin; the *Acta* of the first council of Ephesus recorded their personal subscriptions in Latin. It appears, therefore, that there was no requirement for the elite of the eastern church to know Latin at this time, and, more generally, that Latin was not current among educated men in the East (Millar 2006, pp. 17-19).

While under the long reign of Theodosius II the East empire enjoyed political stability and peace, the same cannot be said for the western empire, where the political stage saw the emergence of military figures of Gothic origin, who came to play an important part in the successions to the throne. Goths were permitted to settle within the Roman territory in 382 by Theodosius I; from this time, it became common that Gothic units joined the Roman army as federate units under the leadership of their own chief. This was to meet the military demands of an empire more and more under the pressure of barbarian incursions and local usurpations.[46] This practice led to an increased power of these non-Roman leaders; by the second half of the fifth century many Roman generals were of Gothic origin (Greatrex 2000).

In the fifth century many western provinces were lost to barbarian tribes; in 410 Roman rule of Britain ended definitively, in Gaul different barbaric kingdoms were formed after the arrivals of Franks, Visigoths, Alamanni and Burgundians, while the Vandals, after they took control of Spain, crossed the Strait of Gibraltar in 429 and eventually captured Carthage in 439. Rome was captured by assault a first time in 410 by the Gothic forces of Alaric, in 455 it was the turn of the Vandals and in 472 it was again besieged and captured by Ricimer, who was at that time dominating the political scene in Italy. Rome had lost for quite some time its role as a capital and from 404 the imperial residence was relocated to Ravenna.

It should also be remembered that during this period there were continuous attempts to stabilise the line of succession to the western throne, and that the eastern rulers from Theodosius II until Zeno, emperor from 474 to 491, tried to exercise their control over the western politics by appointing or recognising the emperors in the West. Nevertheless, the circumstances in the West developed in such a way that in 476

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[46] For an overview of the events, see MITCHELL (2015).

Odoacer deposed the emperor Romulus Augustulus and saw to it that no other *Augustus* was sent from Constantinople. He requested for himself the title of *patricius* and the acceptance of his rule in Italy on behalf of Zeno. He was also declared king by his troops and reigned until his death in 493.[47]

Also in the East the politics of the second half of the fifth century was marked by the increasing influence of military figures of barbaric origin, among whom we can mention the *magister utriusque militiae* Aspar, who had his say on the succession to the throne of Marcian in 450 and Leo in 457 (Mitchell 2015, p. 116). Aspar and his supporters later fell out of favour to the advantage of another ethnic group, the Isaurians. The Isaurians were a group located in southern Asia Minor, and due to the geography of the region, mountainous and isolated, they had never been fully integrated into the structure of the Roman empire (Mitchell 2015, p. 123); ancient sources described them as greedy and bandits (see Elton 2000). Nevertheless, we find members of this group enlisted in the army by Theodosius II. When the emperor Leo died in 474 a member of the Isaurian group, Zeno, became emperor. He was in the entourage of Leo's court as a *comes domesticorum*; he became praetorian prefect of *Oriens* and thereafter married emperor Leo's daughter so that, after Leo and his young son died in 474, he ascended to the throne.[48]

These events are evidence of that social mobility and political ambition of elites we discussed above. Constantinople's social fabric was varied; the capital city attracted people from all the different provinces of the empire, not only from the East, but also refugees of all backgrounds from the western provinces which were lost to the Germanic peoples. The Isaurians were just one of the many ethnic groups which formed the Roman empire, whose members were able to surge to positions of power. It is understood that the political situation could change quickly as people fell out of favour and were then replaced by other competitors. The favour for the Isaurians came to an end when Zeno died without any children to succeed him in 491 and another member of his court, Anastasius, became emperor after marrying Zeno's widow.

With Anastasius' accession to the throne we shall consider the cultural horizons of early sixth-century Constantinople, and examine in particular the literary culture of the capital. The new political framework opened by Anastasius coincided

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[47] An account of the events that took place in the fifth century can be found in MITCHELL (2015).
[48] See *New Pauly*, *sv*. Fl. Zeno [18].

with an age of change in cultural tradition. This will allow us to recognise the role of Priscian and of his work within these horizons. Priscian was an integral part of the social fabric of Constantinople in the first decades of the sixth century; his contribution as a Latin poet at the court of Anastasius and as a Latin *grammaticus* at the *auditorium* will help to understand the direction taken by Roman studies in this period (see Cameron 2009; Nicks 2000).

1.3 **The East of Priscian's time**

In terms of literary culture, the sixth century showed elements both of continuity with the past and of change. Modern scholars have attempted to assess this period by looking at the political, religious and cultural factors that characterised the East at the turn of the sixth century (cf. Cameron 1981; 2009; Rapp 2005; Nicks 2000; Maas 1992; Mango 1981; Cavallo 1978; Momigliano 1958). The ways in which scholars describe this period often centre around the ideas of continuity and change, although too often the main question is whether the sixth century marked the end of the Roman empire or the beginning of the Byzantine empire, instead of assessing the elements of continuity (cf. Cameron 2016; Allen & Jeffreys 1996). In relation to religion, the acceptance of the traditional pagan past was becoming a potential source of conflict in light of an increasing Christianisation of the empire. In the political sphere, the Roman tradition which formed the basis of the eastern administrative and legal system was facing the challenges of a mostly Greek-functioning world and was becoming more and more separated from the West. Looking at the composition of society, Constantinople was having to redefine itself in light of different ethnic, social, religious, and cultural groups that gathered there from all over the ancient world. As such, it can be understood that different areas and groups of society were having to compromise traditional views with new ideas. These are only some of the reasons why assessing the culture of the period is not an easy task (Cameron 2009).

We do not know exactly the circumstances that brought Priscian to Constantinople. If we follow the *communis opinio* that makes him a refugee from Caesarea in Mauretania, he probably arrived in Constantinople at the end of the fifth century when the situation in Vandal North Africa was becoming hard to endure for members of the Roman Christian elite (Ballaira 1989). The Vandals arrived in North Africa during the late 420's, conquered the city of Hippo by 430 and took Carthage in 439. From a religious point of view they were ardent Arians; we know of

contemporary sources that tell us of Roman clergy and civil servants forced to flee from persecution with their properties confiscated; persecutions were particularly hard during the reign of Huneric, who ruled from 477 to 484 (see Martyn 2008). Priscian might have fled from the region in this occasion.

He completed his studies in Constantinople under the *grammaticus* Theoctistus, who was author of an *Institutio artis grammaticae*, as Priscian himself stated in his *Ars*.[49] We suppose that in these years Priscian was able to perfect his mastery of Greek; while it is possible that he could have already had some knowledge of Greek works from his studies in Caesarea or Carthage, it is more likely that he came into contact with the Greek grammatical works that were later so important for his teaching in Constantinople. In fact, knowledge of Greek in the western part of the empire was by the fifth century an exception (Rochette 2008, p. 84).

We also do not know the circumstances that brought Priscian to be one of the intellectuals of Anastasius' entourage. However, we know that the emperor Anastasius was praised for his promotion of literary activity and for encouraging the appointments of literary figures in positions of power; we know of city prefects or praetorian prefects for example who were literary men (Nicks 2000, p. 183).

Priscian himself, in 513, wrote a panegyric to the emperor in which he stressed the importance of a learned elite at the heart of the State.

Nec non eloquio decoratos, maxime Princeps,
quos doctrina potens et sudor musicus auget,
quorum Romanas munit sapientia leges,
adsumis socios iusto moderamine rerum;
et solus doctis das praemia digna labore,
muneribus ditans et pascens mente benigna.[50]

Mighty Princeps, you also choose as your associates in just government those distinguished for their eloquence who are embellished by the power of learning and the exercise of poetry, those whose wisdom protects the Roman laws. You alone grant to learned men deserved rewards for their labours, endow them with gifts and support them with your generous heart (transl. by Coyne 1991).

In this extract Priscian stresses rhetorically the connection between lettered men and the establishment of the State; we can imagine that he counted himself among

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[49] See KASTER (1988, *sv*. Theoctistus 149).
[50] PRISC. *Pan*. 248-253.

those learned men who were chosen by the emperor to serve him. Thus, with his words, Priscian on the one hand praised the emperor for being supportive of literary activity, on the other, made these literary figures an integral part of the State machine. We have seen above that the competition for gaining posts of power must have been strong. While there must have also been a certain degree of contingency in the circumstances that could lead someone to positions of power (family connections for example, or being part of a particular ethnic group favoured by the emperor),[51] being educated was certainly one of the desiderata for anyone wishing to undertake a state career. There is a great deal of rhetoric in Priscian's words, but it becomes clear that the internal functioning of the state needed educated personnel and that members of this entourage felt the need to stress the importance of literary education to hold position of power.[52]

The narrative conveyed by Priscian's words well explains the context of the imperial entourage in late antiquity where it was important for members of the elite to find ways of self-promotion to secure for themselves protection and financial stability. To show literary culture in general, and mastery of poetry in particular, was one of the ways in which protection and financial stability were sought, in return for contributing to the glory of the emperors by writing about their achievements and qualities.

Priscian was not the only intellectual of the period to celebrate Anastasius; Procopius of Gaza was a Greek rhetor and theological writer, and composed in Greek a panegyric to the emperor, too, around 502.[53] Although very different in form and content, Priscian's and Procopius' panegyrics give an insight into the political framework of Anastasius' reign and inform us of the attitudes of literary figures towards the emperor.

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[51] This was the case, for example, with the Isaurians when Zeno became emperor.

[52] It is interesting to see how also the Gothic administration in Italy made use of a narrative that put good governance in relation with the pursuing of the liberal arts, among which grammar occupied the cardinal position. Athalaric, king of the Goths and Romans, in a letter addressed to the Senate of Rome writes: *prima enim grammaticorum schola est fundamentum pulcherrimum litterarum, mater gloriosa facundiae, quae cogitare nouit ad laudem, loqui sine uitio*, and moreover: *grammatica magistra uerborum, ornatrix humani generis* (see Cassiod. *Var*. 9, 21). Later in this letter, Athalaric gives further praise to grammar, oratory, and legal studies in requesting an adequate salary and honour for teachers of such arts.

[53] An edition, translation and comment of Priscian's and Procopius' panegyrics to Anastasius is found in Chauvot (1986).

Like Priscian, another intellectual of the period who voiced the same appreciation of Anastasius' support of learned men was John Lydus.[54] He was a native of Philadelphia in Lydia, born around 490. He moved to Constantinople in 511 to complete his education and started thereafter a long career as a civil servant in the office of the praetorian prefect. He was trained in Greek rhetoric and philosophy, and in Roman law; he learnt therefore Latin, and it was for his knowledge of Latin that he entered the office of the prefect (Nicks 2000). Alongside his professional career he was also a passionate writer of the Roman past; three works are extant: the *De mensibus*, the *De ostentis* and the *De magistratibus*, written in Greek, which respectively deal with the Roman calendar and its holidays, the interpretation of omens and weather signs, and the offices of the Roman state, their organisation and development over the centuries.

It is in the *De magistratibus* that John Lydus praised Anastasius for his appointment of experts of law to the praetorian prefecture and for enforcing the policy that only educated men were to hold the office of prefect (see *Mag*. 3, 50).[55] In this regard, we can mention the professor of law of Beirut Leontius, who was appointed praetorian prefect by Anastasius in 510 (Nicks 2000, p. 183).

John Lydus also wrote poetry, including a panegyric to Justinian, and in 543 was also given by Justinian a teaching position of Latin at the *auditorium*. Therefore, John Lydus' life and career well illustrate the conditions and aspirations of eastern elites. Like Priscian, he was learned in both Greek and Latin, and significantly in his works ventures also into etymological explanations to establish a relationship between languages (cf. Dmitriev 2018).

Flourishing under the reign of Anastasius there were other figures who were attracted by the supportive atmosphere at court; the Greek poet Christodorus of Coptus,[56] in Egypt, wrote some poems called Πάτρια, poems about the early histories of different cities, and two epics, the Λυδιακά about the mythical history of Lydia, and the Ἰσαυρικά which was a celebration of the seven-year long campaign of Anastasius against the Isaurians.[57] Notably, if we look at the laudatory contributions that have

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[54] Cf. MARTINDALE (1980, sv. Ioannes Lydus 75). For a detailed discussion of Lydus' life and works in the context of mid-sixth century Constantinople see MAAS (1992).
[55] For an edition, translation, and comment of the text, see BANDY (1983).
[56] See *New Pauly*, *sv*. Christodorus.
[57] After Anastasius' ascension to the throne the leaders of the Isaurians who held positions of power in Constantinople were removed from their posts and started a rebellion which was finally put down in 498.

survived, Anastasius seems to have insisted on this victorious depiction of himself against the Isaurian group; Priscian and Procopius of Gaza in their respective panegyrics, and Christodorus in the Ἰσαυρικά and in epigrams included in the *Anthologia Graeca*, all celebrated Anastasius' Isaurian victory. Croke (2008) well shows how this was part of the imperial propaganda of the time; Anastasius wanted to relate his personal story with the Roman past, and with Pompey in particular. Pompey was known for his conquests in the East and in particular in Asia Minor; in the same way Anastasius, after securing the Roman authority in Isauria, region in southern Asia Minor, was a modern Pompey. Anastasius' triumphs over the Persians in 505 were instead celebrated by another Greek poet of the time, Colluthus of Lycopolis,[58] in Egypt, in the epic poem, now lost, Περσικά.

To some extent, the experience of poets like Colluthus and Christodorus as well as Procopius, John Lydus and Priscian, found an antecedent in the cultural phenomenon described by Cameron (1965) of the "wandering poets". They were a group of professional poets, who originated in Greek Egypt between the fourth and sixth centuries, and spent their lives moving from city to city throughout the Empire, writing poetry, as a profession, to secure themselves the favours of local and military officials. They used their learning and eloquence as a means of subsistence and offered mastery in composing panegyrics, invectives, epithalamia, and epics. Most of their commemorative verses are now lost because they concerned "the forgotten deeds of forgotten men" (Cameron 1965, p. 468). We have however inherited a number of their epics which continued to be read into the late Byzantine period. For example, we still have the Greek works of Triphiodorus, Musaeus and Nonnus. Poetry was a popular profession in the later empire and members of the elite chose to pursue a career of this kind because with the right talent and social connections it could lead to a comfortable life. It is very interesting that many of these poets were also grammarians and opened schools in the cities where they stayed. This was a profession that could lead to an advancement of career by becoming a teacher of rhetoric but could also be the springboard for a career in the imperial bureaucracy, where knowledge of Greek and Latin were required.

From a look at the lives and careers of some of these wandering poets, collected by Cameron (1965), it is clear that their fortune was often tied to the fortune of their

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[58] See *New Pauly*, *sv*. Colluthus.

influential patrons. It is the case for example of Pamprepius.[59] He was born in 440 in Panopolis in Egypt, and after studying at Alexandria, he moved to Athens where he became a grammarian, and was under the protection of a magnate called Theagenes. But when, for some reason, he fell out of favour, he was forced to leave Athens and reached Constantinople in 476. There, he was able to find the sponsorship of an Isaurian general, Illus, who appointed him as a teacher at the *auditorium* after having been impressed by his poetical skills. Illus made Pamprepius also *quaestor* and consul and *patricius*. Pamprepius' fortune changed again when Illus returned to Isauria; he lost the chair at the *auditorium* and was later forced to leave the capital.

Cameron (1965) focused on a particular group of intellectuals, who shared the same origin, but as Kaster (1988, chapter 3) showed, between the fourth and the sixth centuries many grammarians, not only Egyptians, but also Africans and from Asia Minor, moved to Rome or Constantinople in search of fortune. The examples collected by Kaster testify the social fluidity of the period, and the professional possibilities that a knowledge of Greek, Latin or both offered.

In the sixth century, Constantinople attracted all sorts of visitors, refugees from the western provinces, intellectuals in search of patrons and a career in the imperial bureaucracy, but also religious envoys from the West and from the eastern provinces, and ambassadors and aristocrats from Italy, which at that time was ruled by the Ostrogoths of Theoderic.[60]

It is worth briefly considering the nature of the relationships between the imperial capital and the Ostrogothic kingdom because this gives an insight into the presence of western aristocrats and intellectuals in the eastern capital at the beginning of the sixth century.

Although after the deposition of Romulus Augustulus in 476 the West remained without a Roman emperor, political and diplomatic relationships between the eastern court and the western kingdoms, especially Ostrogothic Italy, continued. While from an eastern perspective, we observe a claim of control over the West, from a western perspective there was an attempt to obtain a leading position for Gothic Italy in the West.

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[59] In addition to CAMERON (1965), see KASTER (1988, n. 114).
[60] In Italy the German king Odoacer ruled from Ravenna from 476 until 493 when he was killed by Theoderic, who was sent to Italy in 488 by the emperor Zeno to overthrow and replace Odoacer.

Although eastern emperors never abandoned their claim to rule the Latin West, we observe a change of attitude towards the West between the reigns of Anastasius and Justinian. It is understood that, after Odoacer deposed the last emperor in 476, the responsibility of exercising imperial power fell upon Constantinople only. In the early sixth century, with hindsight, the year 476 in the East started to be perceived as a turning point in the relationship between the two parts of the Empire (Croke 1983).

The first extant indication of the historical significance of the 476 events is in Marcellinus' *Chronicle*, first published in 518.[61] While at first Anastasius recognised Theoderic as ruler in Italy, and seemed to renounce aspirations to take back control over the West, towards the end of Anastasius' reign the hope of regaining the western territories, must have become a more vivid prospect, not only for the emperor, but also among the elites.[62] As Croke (2001) has shown, "marking a precise point (i.e. 476) when the political establishment of the west could no longer be seen as part of the Roman empire, and was not yet reattached to it, presupposes an ideology which promoted unity and reunification of east and west, as well as a quest for reattachment" (p. 195). Later, when Justinian assumed the throne in 527, he tried to reaffirm Roman authority over the West with a series of wars in Africa, Italy, and Spain. He waged war first against the Vandal kingdom in Africa between 533 and 534 and then against the Ostrogoths in Italy between 535 and 554; in 552 he also managed to capture part of the Visigothic kingdom in Spain.[63]

On the other hand, if we observe the nature of the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy, Theoderic, who reigned from 493 to 526, strove for a reconciliation of Gothic and Roman interests.[64] Although to some extent Goths retained their tongue and law, Theoderic was driven by the desire to give his reign credibility and prestige above the other barbarian kingdoms by modelling his kingdom on the eastern empire. It is worth

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[61] Marcellinus was an Illyrian official under the emperor Justinian. He wrote a chronicle in Latin which was a continuation of Jerome's chronicle from 379 CE until Anastasius' death in 518. It was later updated to incorporate Justinian's victory in Africa in 534. Under the year 476 Marcellinus reports: «Odoacer rex Gothorum Romam optinuit. Orestem Odoacer ilico trucidauit. Augustulum filium Orestis Odoacer in Lucullano Campaniae castello exilii poena damnauit. Hesperium Romanae gentis imperium, quod septingentesimo nono urbis conditae anno primus Augustorum Octauianus Augustus tenere coepit, cum hoc Augustulo periit, anno decessorum regni imperatorum quingentesimo uigesimo secundo, Gothorum dehinc regibus Romam tenentibus». For the text and commentary of the *Chronicle*, see CROKE (1995); for a thorough study on Marcellinus and his work, see CROKE (2001).

[62] Priscian himself in his *Panegyric* to Anastasius hopes that both Rome and Constantinople (*utraque Roma*) may one day obey Anastasius (v. 265).

[63] For an overview of the events, see MITCHELL (2015).

[64] An evaluation of the Ostrogothic rule in Italy and of the reign of Theoderic, and relevant bibliography, is found in AMORY (1997), HEATHER (1995) and LUISELLI (1992).

noting that Theoderic knew Constantinople and the imperial court himself because he was sent as a hostage by his father when he was child to end warfare between the Romans and the Ostrogoths, and lived there for ten years (461/62- 471/72). It is likely that he received an education while living in Constantinople and became acquainted with its culture.

When considering the cultural and political attitudes of Theoderic, it is important to note that the image of his reign is influenced by the nature of the ancient sources available to us. The two main sources for the functioning of the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy, Cassiodorus[65] (c. 490- c. 585/590) and Ennodius[66] (474-521), are both Roman, and reflect therefore a Roman perspective of Theoderic's reign. They rather concentrated on the elements of continuity between the Roman past and the new political and cultural order, than on the Gothic contributions to the identity of the kingdom (Heather 1995, p. 152).

In particular, Ennodius, an aristocrat from Gaul, who entered into the service of the church and became bishop of Pavia in 513, wrote a panegyric to Theoderic in 507, where he portrayed the Gothic king as a classically educated man, who defended Roman law and restored the *res publica* in Italy (see Amory 1997, chapter 4).

We find the same rhetoric in Cassiodorus' work. He was from a family of senatorial aristocracy and carried out important political functions in the Gothic administration of the State; he was *quaestor*, *magister officiorum* and praetorian prefect. Throughout his long civil career, he worked towards merging the cultural heritage of ancient Rome with the new Gothic rulership. Around 538 he compiled twelve books of *Variae* (*scil*. *epistulae*) which collected edicts and correspondence of the Gothic king Theoderic and his successors, which he wrote on their behalf, charter forms and his own administrative orders. Although edited by Cassiodorus, these documents inevitably reflected the political ideology of the Gothic rulers in Italy, who made use of members of the Roman elite to attract support from the Roman population and legitimise their power. In this respect it was indeed important to maintain political relationships with the eastern Empire. In one exchange between Theodoric and Anastasius, Theoderic praised the emperor and the eastern Empire with these words: *regnum nostrum imitatio uestra est, forma boni propositi, unici exemplar imperii: qui*

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[65] See *New Pauly*, *sv*. Cassiodorus.
[66] See *New Pauly*, *sv*. Ennodius, Magnus Felix.

quantum uos sequimur, tantum gentes alias anteimus (Cassiod. *Var.* 1, 1), which is evidence of the ideological attempt to shape the identity of the new Gothic kingdom. The image of the Gothic rulership which overall emerges from Cassiodorus' letters consisted of two main elements: the exhibition of Gothic military power and the maintenance of Roman law and customs.[67]

Ennodius' and Cassiodorus' works convey a western perspective of the political situation which arose after the end of the rule of Roman emperors in the West. Members of the western Roman elite still thought that a western empire could recover and continue under the protection and stability given by the Gothic military force. This was different from the eastern perspective, which came to see the West as lost to a barbaric people and therefore to be reconquered (see Amory, chapter 4). Nevertheless, in the West not all members of aristocracy shared the same political views; in this regard, it is worth mentioning the cases of Symmacus and Boethius, who have been often described by modern historians as philobyzantine.[68]

Symmachus was a prominent member of the Roman senate and highly respected among the Catholic clergy in Rome. He was consul in 485 and for a long time maintained good relationship with Theoderic. He was also a very learned man, both in Greek and in Latin, and had a deep interest in Neoplatonic philosophy. He wrote a *Roman History* which has survived only in one fragment. Chadwick (1981) warns that it is not easy to reconstruct from one fragment only Symmachus' political views, but claims however that he probably supported the idea of a restoration of the imperial rule in the West; Symmachus "*spoke* for the Roman aristocrats who *had* no political alternative to collaboration, at least for the time being, and who *saw* their cooperation with Arian Goths as the work of educating their new masters" (p. 9).

Symmachus' cultural interests and political views probably influenced his son-in-law's ideals, Boethius, who also came from an ancient senatorial family and held in turn high positions in the Gothic administration; he was *magister officiorum* from 522.[69] Like Symmachus, Boethius cultivated interests in Greek learning and pursued a plan of translating and commenting on the works of Plato and Aristotle in order to create a library of philosophical texts in Latin (cf. Zetzel 2018, p. 212).

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[67] Cf. CASSIOD. *Var.* 3, 43. For the political narrative portrayed by the works of Cassiodorus and Ennodius, see AMORY (1997).
[68] For a presentation of the issue, see AMORY (1997, chapter 4).
[69] See *New Pauly*, *sv*. Boethius.

Symmachus and Boethius therefore were significant public figures in Ostrogothic Italy, and because of their cultural interests and political duties had constant contacts with Constantinople. Both spent time in Constantinople and had a circle of friends in the eastern capital. Symmachus, for example, paid a visit to the eastern capital about 500 as Theoderic's ambassador; Boethius was in contact with members of the *Anicii* family (cf. Momigliano 1958).

Religious interests were also a reason for institutional relations between Rome and Constantinople. In particular, a schism between the western Church and Constantinople had begun in 484 and was not resolved until 518, after the death of Anastasius, who had monophysite views;[70] Symmachus and Boethius were also involved in religious matters as members of the Catholic elite, if a distinction can be seen between religious and political interests at that time (see Chadwick 1981). When the schism was resolved, thanks to Justin's determination to restore church unity with the West, there was a new convergence of the pope and the eastern emperor. It must be remembered that Theoderic followed the Arian faith; this might have undermined his trust in those political figures who were too closely connected with the eastern court until the point that he had both Boethius and Symmachus executed about 525/526, because of the suspicions that they were conspiring for a political reunification with the East (Chadwick 1981).[71]

These events, while they cannot explain in an exhaustive and unequivocal manner the nature of the relationships between the imperial capital and the Ostrogothic kingdom, help to centre what seems to have been an important cultural issue at that time, namely the need to redefine the relationship of the present political and socio-cultural systems with the Roman past, and conjugate the contributions of new ethnic groups with the ideals and practices of traditional elites.

At the beginning of the sixth century Constantinople was an exceptional place for encounters and exchanges by representatives of different political, religious, and cultural groups. Political and religious matters were of high importance to the members of secular and religious elites; however, cultural activities accompanied and sustained the official duties of these elites. Constantinople in the sixth century enjoyed a dynamic cultural and literary scene consisting of both Greek and Roman studies.

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[70] The Acacian schism; see MITCHELL (2015, p. 294-299).
[71] Cf. AMORY (1997, p. 132); Boethius was the victim of unjust suspicion since there is no evidence in his works that he wanted a political reunification of Italy with the East.

Although the vast majority of population spoke Greek, and more and more sectors of society and state were functioning in Greek, the eastern capital hosted Latin-speaking communities which consisted, as we have already mentioned, of western refugees, mostly from Africa, Italy and Illyricum, or of veterans of the army (cf. Croke 2001). Also, the emperors Anastasius, Justin and Justinian were all of Illyrian origins. These communities were therefore a favourable background for the continuation of Latin studies and formed the preferred audience of literary productions in Latin.

Cameron (2009) gives a complete overview of the state of Roman studies in the sixth century. There is indeed evidence of considerable interest in Latin, Roman history, and literature among members of Constantinopolitan elites in the sixth century, although there was a decline of Latin knowledge, especially from the mid-sixth century.

There was a significant cultural change between Anastasius' and Justinian's reigns which consisted in the different attitude towards the pagan past and education showed by Justinian. Nicks (2000) described the Anastasian years as reflecting "a cultural transition in an empire looking back towards its classical roots yet unable to ignore the increasing pervasiveness of Christianity" (p. 194). During these years, however, authors were able "to explore new combinations of the classical and the Christian" before the measures against pagan culture implemented by Justinian a few decades later.

With Justinian, the acceptance of the Roman past within the new imperial ideology depended on the fact that it was freed from pagan associations, because incompatible with his new religious policy. Justinian presented himself as the strongest supporter of Chalcedonian Christianity in the attempt to achieve a unified Roman Christian empire. He launched therefore persecutions against pagans; mostly his targets were aristocrats and civil servants, who were imbued with traditional Greek and Latin culture. Target of Justinian's religious policy was also secular education, which was in many respects pagan. The major centres of learning in the East carried on the Greek education; Gaza, Alexandria, Antioch, Athens were all centres where studies of Greek rhetoric and philosophy had flourished since the Hellenistic period. Justinian issued edicts which forbade pagans, heretics, and Jews to teach and hold offices. It is well known that in 529 he decreed the closure of the Academy at Athens. In her overview of literary activity under Justinian's reign, Rapp (2005) concludes that while in his younger years Justinian seemed to be a patron of literary talent, as

demonstrated by the grant of the position of *cancellarius* to Marcellinus, after becoming emperor he only commissioned a history of the Persian wars to John Lydus, and therefore argues that Justinian did not create any incentives for the production of literature.[72]

Although it seems that Justinian did not particularly favour literary culture like his predecessor Anastasius, his long reign witnessed a flourishing of poets, historians, chroniclers, and jurists. We can mention the historian Procopius of Caesarea, who, in addition to describing Justinian's military campaigns in Persia, North Africa and Italy in the *History of the Wars*, and Justinian's building program in the work *On Buildings*, was also author of the non-official pamphlet *Secret Histories* containing some criticism of Justinian's policies (cf. Rapp 2005, p. 385).

Very active was also Agathias, who was an historian and a poet as well as a lawyer; he was continuator of the *Wars* of Procopius, wrote in hexameters the now-lost love poem *Daphiaca*, and composed many epigrams which he published in a *Cycle* together with similar poems written by friends and contemporaries. The *Cycle* was published under Justinian or Justin II and later incorporated into the *Anthologia Palatina*.[73]

Certainly, these literary figures showed a deep knowledge of classical literature, and especially poetry. They made use of traditional classical forms and rhetorical techniques in their works, with the addition of images and concepts of the new Christian ideology (cf. Nicks 2000).

A last striking aspect concerning these learned men consists in the fact that they were able to adapt to different situations and activities throughout their lives. They studied and practised literature in addition to carrying out official secular and religious duties.[74] Many of them had legal training; Procopius, for example, or Agathias, who practised as a barrister in Constantinople. In this regard, it has also been observed (Cameron 1966) that a large number of the poets, who compiled some of the epigrams contained in Agathias' *Cycle* were legal practitioners themselves, showing

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[72] Scholars do not agree on assessing the literary culture under Justinian's reign; see CAMERON (2016); NICKS (2000); MAAS (1992); CAVALLO (1978).

[73] For a complete survey of his life and activity, see MARTINDALE (1992, *sv*. Agathias); JANISZEWSKI, STEBNICKA & SZABAT (2015, *sv*. Agathias); CAMERON (1966).

[74] It is worth remembering, for example, that Ennodius was in Constantinople in 515 and 517 on behalf of the pope for the settlement of the Acacian schism; Symmachus and Boethius had the chance to engage in Greek learning while in Constantinople carrying out diplomatic functions on behalf of Theoderic.

the breadth of their expertise and the versatility of their education. Practising poetry was one of the learned activities that members of the elites enjoyed and shows the continuity of traditional education.

We have already mentioned that one of the careers undertaken by educated elites was in teaching, and that teachers were held in great esteem by the court.[75] After this general overview of the cultural horizons and literary figures of early sixth-century Constantinople, I shall briefly describe the status of grammatical studies in late antiquity, the development of teaching tools, and later focus more specifically on Priscian and his activity as a *grammaticus* at the *auditorium*.

1.4 Grammatical studies

Roman education evolved as a result of the contacts with the Greek speaking world from the second century BCE and consisted of three stages. A young boy would first be taught by an elementary teacher, under whose supervision he would learn elementary reading and writing; he would later enter the school of a *grammaticus* where he would learn language and literature, especially poetry, and would eventually continue to the school of a rhetor, where he would practice a series of preliminary exercises leading on to the theory and practice of declamation. Members of aristocratic Roman families would be taught both Greek and Latin studies (see Joyal, McDougall & Yardley 2009). The student's experience was therefore directed by three goals: mastery of correct language, knowledge of literature and the ability to perform in public speaking (cf. Kaster 1988).

Grammar was the basic and core teaching for anyone either wishing to begin or to deepen their knowledge of literature. Grammatical competence was necessary to engage with literary texts, and in turn, these texts were a help in learning grammatical structures and usages. Texts were studied very closely both for the style, use of

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[75] We have many examples of measures in favour of teachers, which attest the importance accorded by the State to this category of intellectuals. Imperial laws show interest in duties and rights of professors, by stating, for example, how much they should be paid (*Cod. Just.* 1, 27.1.42; law issued for the province of Africa by Justinian in 534), or by considering a rejection if "they should not show themselves to be useful to students (*Cod. Just.* 10, 53.2)", or by instructing that "grammarians and other professors of literature [...], be immune from every payment and from all civic or public services" and that "they should not be summoned to or produced in court or suffer any injury". Moreover, it was ordered to give them compensation and salaries, so that they might more easily instruct many in liberal studies (Cf. *Cod. Just.* 10, 53.6). Theodosius II ordered that the grammarians of Greek and Latin, the rhetoricians and the professors of law appointed in the *auditorium*, if they have lived in a praiseworthy manner, and if they have demonstrated their experience in teaching and the necessary skills, should after twenty years be honoured by receiving the countship (Cf. *Cod. Theod.* 6, 21.1).

language and rhetorical devices employed by their authors, and for all knowledge concerning history, philosophy, religion, technical expertise, customs and habits transmitted therein.

In Antiquity "grammar" had a scope broader than our modern definition of it. Dionysius Thrax in his Τέχνη γραμματική (second century BCE) explains that "grammar is the empirical knowledge (ἐμπειρία) of the usages of language as normally used among poets and prose writers".[76] This ἐμπειρία is presented as a close and detailed reading of literary texts, as shown by the way he sub-classifies it:

1- proficient reading with regard to prosody (ἀνάγνωσις κατὰ προσῳδίαν);

2- explanation of the poetical figures contained within (ἐξήγησις κατὰ τοὺς ποιητικοὺς τρόπους);

3- ready interpretation of difficult words and narratives (γλωσσῶν καὶ ἱστοριῶν ἀπόδοσις);

4- discovery of etymology (ἐτυμολογίας εὕρεσις);

5- setting out of analogies (ἀναλογίας ἐκλογισμός);

6- criticism of poetical works (κρίσις ποιημάτων).

As the list above shows, literary texts, and especially poetry, constituted the primary source for grammatical studies.

This understanding of grammar was long-lasting in the Greek world and was inherited by the Roman school system as a result of Roman appropriation of Greek culture. This definition of grammar was translated into Latin by Varro,[77] and by others, and Quintilian based his observations on the orator's education commenting on it.[78] Quintilian's contribution is important because it reflected the learning process of the Roman elite of the first century CE, which included also the study of Greek language and literature.

Quintilian enlarged the range of readings that a serious student had to undertake. Poetical works were not enough (*nec poetas legisse satis est*):[79] this is a clear emendation of the canonical definition of grammar of Dionysius Thrax which spoke of ποιήματα. The same definition was evidently understood also by Apollonius

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[76] *GG* 1.1/3, 5.2-3: γραμματική ἐστιν ἐμπειρία τῶν παρὰ ποιηταῖς τε καὶ συγγραφεῦσιν ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ λεγομένων. For an analysis of Dionysius Thrax' definition of grammar, see WOUTERS & SWIGGERS (2015, pp. 522-528).
[77] Varro's definition is quoted by Marius Victorinus: *ut Varroni placet, ars grammatica [...] scientia est eorum quae a poetis historicis oratoribusque dicuntur ex parte maiore* (*GL* 6, 4.4-6).
[78] See QVINT. *Inst.*, 1.4.
[79] QVINT. *Inst.*, 1,4,4.

Dyscolus in the Περὶ συντάξεως, in which he underlined the importance of grammatical studies for the interpretation of poetry (ἐξήγησις τῶν ποιημάτων).[80]

The ultimate goal of Roman education was rhetorical training, so that the *grammaticus* often shaped his instruction to act as a preparation for rhetorical studies and could include a set of exercises aiming at this (see Law 2003). In this respect, the roles of teachers sometimes overlapped, since there was not a rigid separation between the levels of education; the progression of studies was therefore characterised by the continuity of grammatical training with rhetorical instruction. Despite the flexibility of the scope of grammatical studies, the basic texts for the formal study of Latin were the *artes* which served as essential tools for Roman schoolboys wishing to study Latin literature as part of their training in becoming orators. Latin *artes* did not reach an established format before the fourth century, with Donatus.[81]

While the essence of the ancient art of grammar can be condensed into the well-known definition given by Quintilian: *recte loquendi scientia et poetarum enarratio*,[82] it is important to consider the focus of grammarians' expertise in late antiquity. From the fourth century there seems to have been a shift of attention from the *ratio loquendi* to the *ratio scribendi*. While Latin was spoken by the Roman population, it was subject to a progressive change. The Latin *artes* of late antiquity reflect this shift; the main subject of study was the written word, which had to be preserved from change and the influences of the spoken language.

As Kaster (1988) shows, the grammarian's instruction lay in knowledge of the correct usage of language. This correct usage, which can be called *Latinitas*, was based on four sources on which the grammarian relied: *natura*, *ratio* (or *analogia*), *usus* (or *consuetudo*) and *auctoritas*. While *natura* referred to the raw material of the language, *ratio* consisted of rules which could be rationally expounded and applied to this material and were eventually set down in the *artes*. A correct usage was found by grammarians either in the literary authority of chosen writers (*auctoritas*) or in the current usage (*usus*). These four components of language played a different and intricate part in the grammarians' hands, and each of the *artes* that have survived shows the ability of the grammarian to find a balance between them.

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[80] *GG* 2.2/3, 2.2.
[81] For an overview of the development of Roman grammatical writings, see ZETZEL (2018, p. 162-187).
[82] Cf. QVINT. *Inst*. 1.4.2-3.

It has to be underlined that the Latin that grammarians described in their *artes* was the standard language, a prestige form of language which was mostly a written language, as opposed to colloquial and spoken language; for *usus* usually referred to the usage of learned elites. Grammarians were to counteract changes in this language and to preserve the norms of writing and speaking.

At its height the Roman Empire stretched from the British isles to the shores of Asia Minor and beyond, and brought together different populations under Roman law; in a world that lacked modern means of communication, which are characterised by a fast and wide coverage, such a vastness and diversity were factors that affected the spread and preservation of a common standard language; this explains the acknowledgement of the role of grammarians as *custodes Latini sermonis*. [83] Moreover, there were no such institutions of the sort of the Académie française or the Accademia della Crusca that dealt with matters pertaining to the Latin language or had any control over norms of writing and speech. This control was exercised instead by school teachers, and the *usus auctorum* became the model of standard language for elites; thus, literary works embodied the ultimate authority of correctness, and were the expression of the unity of the standard language. To use the words of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, grammarians held "the monopoly of the consecration and canonisation of legitimate writers and writing". [84] The presence, study, and transmission of canonical works at school were to assure an everlasting source of Roman identity, hence their centrality in education. A correct reading, interpretation and judgment of texts constituted the most important part of any grammatical training; from Varro until the Byzantine scholars who collected the *scholia* on Dionysius' work there is consistency of teaching on this point.[85]

Before looking at the main Latin grammarians of fourth and fifth centuries, it is worth recalling the well-established division of ancient Latin grammars according

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[83] SEN. *epist*. 95, 65.
[84] BOURDIEU (1991, p. 52).
[85] Cf. Varro's partition of the art of grammar contained in Diomedes' *Ars* (*GL* 1, 426.21-22): *grammaticae officia, ut adserit Varro, constat in partibus quattuor, lectione, enarratione, emendatione, iudicio* with the phrasing of the grammarian Dositheus (*GL* 7, 376.5-7) and with the passage from the *prolegomena* to the *scholia Vaticana*: μέρη δὲ τῆς γραμματικῆς εἰσι τέσσαρα, ἀναγνωστικόν, διορθωτικόν, ἐξηγητικόν, κριτικόν. The definition of grammar itself seems to have slightly changed as the *ratio loquendi* seems to have been put aside; the Byzantine author of the *scholia Vaticana* distinguishes two parts of grammar: the γραμματικὴ μικρά being concerned with writing and reading the "written language" (περὶ τὸ γράφειν καὶ ἀναγινώσκειν τὴν ἔγγραφον φωνήν), and the γραμματικὴ μεγάλη which dealt instead with the interpretation of poetry (περὶ τὴν ἑρμηνείαν τῶν ποιητῶν); cf. *GG* 1.1/3, 114.23-29.

to the typological criteria presented and explained by Law (1987, 1996, 2003). There are two main groups into which grammars are divided: the *Schulgrammatik* type and the *regulae* type. *Schulgrammatik* type grammars are organised according to logical and semantic criteria which are intended to reflect the logical structure of language. They present definitions and explanations of the parts of speech as the starting point of their teachings and proceed thereafter with a discussion of the properties (*accidentia*) of each part. *Schulgrammatik* type grammars were "the indigenous type of grammar in the West" (Law 2003, p. 83). Donatus's *Ars maior* can be taken as the canonical work for this genre.

On the other hand, *regulae* type grammars follow more formal criteria in the attempt to describe Latin words, such as type of declension or conjugation. They seem to have been written in areas where Latin was not the first language, and therefore to have been tools apt to describe the rules of Latin to anyone wishing to learn it as a second language (Law 2003, p. 83).

This distinction between *Schulgrammatik* type and *regulae* type grammars should not be taken to imply that they were two separate worlds; very often late Latin grammarians tried to integrate their works of *Schulgrammatik* structure with *regulae* material which explained linguistic forms through analogy.

The central part of Latin grammars is usually occupied by morphology with a description of the eight parts of speech, but there are also sections on orthography, phonology and accentuation, which include the discussion of letters and their combinations, sections on syllables and on the formation of words. Grammarians could include in their *artes* also parts concerning metrics and sometimes the discussion of the *uitia et uirtutes orationis*, namely the faults and figures of speech, which is a topic standing on the border between grammar and rhetoric. It was in these parts of the *artes* that grammarians dealt with syntactic issues; they distinguished *barbarismi*, which were faults concerning the phonology and morphology of words, from *soloecismi*, which consisted of wrong syntactic choices (cf. Vainio 1997).

Moreover, ancient grammatical treatises preserve and transmit a considerable number of literary quotations because these quotations were interesting to grammarians on account of a particular word or singular syntactic usage, or for metrical reasons. Often these quotes have been of interest to modern scholars in the study of the tradition of the classical authors who wrote them. They are sometimes our only extant sources for minor writers of the ancient world.

The material contained in the *artes* was often borrowed by and collected from different writers; definitions, literary quotations and examples of language contained in Latin grammars are often used by successive grammarians whose sources are usually difficult to track down if they are not named. This is a particular feature of ancient grammatical treatises, not only of the *artes*, but also of glossaries, lexica, and commentaries; they heavily relied on tradition and previous scholarship.

Also, if we take into consideration *Schulgrammatik* type grammars, we notice that they contain definitions and instructions that are often not for beginners. These instructions sometimes referred to philosophical theories or to debates within ancient scholarship. It seems therefore that this kind of teaching tools were not designed for the completely Latinless and were sometimes more useful for advanced students or as a reference tools for teachers.

We owe to Donatus the systematisation of the structure and topics of these texts. His *Ars maior* and *Ars minor* were highly influential in the successive Latin grammatical tradition up to the Middle Ages. While the *Ars maior* was designed more for an advanced study of Latin, the *Ars minor* was more suitable for beginners thanks to its question and answer format. However, they were clearly "targeted at an audience of native speakers who have already mastered the forms of their mother tongue; what Donatus does is to make such people aware of the various morphosemantic categories of their language, and to give them a technical vocabulary with which to label those categories" (Law 2003, p. 80).

Donatus became the object of study of the next generations of grammarians. At the end of the fourth century the grammarian Servius composed a *Commentarius in artem Donati*, which was later used in the fifth century by Pompeius and Cledonius in their commentaries.[86] Law (2003) sees in the flourishing of commentaries on grammar the sign of a change of Roman education. From the fourth century it was not only important to comment on literary texts but also on grammatical texts.

However, the fourth century marked a cornerstone in the development of Latin grammatical tradition. Modern scholars recognise a fundamental uniformity of the grammatical tradition from Probus' grammar, dated to the beginning of the fourth century, to Marius Victorinus' and Donatus's works, all three presumably written in Rome, then continuing to Charisius' and Diomedes' *artes*, dated between the mid-

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[86] Cf. KASTER (1988).

fourth and the beginning of the fifth century, which were composed instead in the Greek east, to arrive to Priscian (Zetzel 2018, p. 191).

It has to be underlined that at some point in late antiquity Latin grammars were produced in the East.[87] This corresponded with the diffusion of Latin in the eastern provinces, as discussed above (section 1.2), and is evidence of the fact that more and more Greek speakers approached Latin learning, in addition to the Latin speakers residing in the East. Both Charisius' and Diomedes' grammars seem to have been aimed at learners with little knowledge of Latin, due to their attention to Greek usages and idioms (cf. Dickey 2016). One might object that a person with little knowledge of Latin would have found Charisius' and Diomedes' grammars difficult to understand, since they were written in Latin; it should be remembered that in the ancient world grammars of Latin were written in Latin and grammars of Greek in Greek. It was probably the teacher's responsibility to explain in Greek the rules of Latin grammar and provide translations for the students (Dickey 2016). On the other hand, Zetzel (2018, p. 172) suggests that the *artes* of Charisius and Diomedes were designed for teachers as reference books.

A more significant piece of evidence of Latin learning in the East is the fourth-century bilingual grammar of Dositheus, who was a Greek-speaker grammarian probably from Asia Minor (cf. Kaster 1988, *sv.*). He composed his *Ars grammatica* in Latin but added a running Greek translation for part of his work. Notably, the analysis of the examples used by Dositheus shows the presence of legal terms and expressions and reveals that Dositheus' grammar was particularly useful to students interested in legal studies (Lenoble, Swiggers & Wouters 2000).

Considering the need to learn Latin as a foreign language, *regulae* type grammars were probably more effective for students with little knowledge of Latin. While *Schulgrammatik* type *artes* were organised according to logical and semantic criteria, which assumed a prior understanding of Latin, *regulae* type grammars concentrated only on form, providing learners with the endings of declensions, genders and conjugations, which beginners most needed.

Some of the extant *regulae* type grammars were indeed produced in areas where Latin was not the first language of the population (Law 2003, p. 83). This genre

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[87] A discussion of the teaching of Latin in Constantinople in late antiquity, and the relevant grammarians of the time, can be found in ROCHETTE (2015).

of grammars include Phocas' *Ars de nomine et uerbo*, which was probably written in Rome between the fourth and fifth century (cf. Kaster 1988, *sv*.), two treatises entitled *Regulae*, transmitted respectively under Palaemon's and Saint Augustine's names, the latter probably composed in North Africa, [88] Priscian's *Institutio de nomine et pronomine et uerbo* and Eutyches' *Ars de uerbo*, both produced in Constantinople in the first half of the sixth century.

In the East, other teaching tools were produced from the third century to meet the needs of Greek-speaking students. It is worth remembering that while Roman education included Greek studies as part of the curriculum of the elites since the first century BCE, in the East Latin started to be learned by Greek speakers only from the third century CE, and it was largely a utilitarian enterprise. Greek speakers therefore decided to learn Latin not when they were children, but usually as young adults, when they trained for specific professions, in the civil and judicial administration or in the army (see Dickey 2016). It is understood that learners could have had different reasons to undertake Latin learning; the main reason, however, was to acquire the linguistic skills required in the administration and in the practice of law (cf. Dickey 2016; Millar 2009; Rochette 2008). There seems to have been no learning of Latin for leisure.

Latin learning was indeed preparatory to law studies in late antiquity, and as Millar (1999) pointed out, although there is no much evidence of the actual process involved in learning Latin as part of mastering Roman law, there is the remarkable evidence of the compilation of the *Corpus iuris* commissioned by Justinian in 529. He asked his experts to codify and publish the entire corpus of Roman law on a definitive basis; the *Corpus iuris* was conceived in order to collect all the legal writings that had accumulated over the centuries. The task was assigned to a group of lawyers under the responsibility of the *quaestor sacri palatii* Tribonian. In its final form, it consists of different parts, namely the *Codex Iustinianus*, the *Digesta*, and the *Institutiones*. There are then the *Nouellae* which consist of all the new laws issued after 534 which were, however, mostly written in Greek showing that Greek started to be used also in this area. The codification of existing Roman law would not have been completed without individuals competent in Latin, which testifies the importance of Latin studies in the East.

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[88] For an edition and comment of Pseudo-Palaemon's *Regulae*, see ROSELLINI (2001); for an edition, translation, and comment of Pseudo-Augustine's *Regulae*, see MARTORELLI (2011); cf. LAW (2003, p. 85).

Having said that, the basic need for a Latin learner was to learn first the alphabet and to read. The evidence that we gather from papyri found in Egypt and from the *Hermeneumata Pseudodositheanea* shows that students at first engaged with easy texts arranged in a columnar layout, with the Latin texts usually on the left.[89] With the term *Hermeneumata* we refer to a group of bilingual school books containing different kind of exercises with which students engaged in their Latin learning; the *colloquia* are one of these exercises, namely made-up stories in the form of a discourse (see p. 17).

Students also read excerpts from the most famous Latin authors, especially Cicero, Sallust, Terence, and Vergil; sometimes translations of these texts were provided, but students could also be presented with monolingual Latin texts and therefore they needed dictionaries, glossaries, and commentaries. Dickey (2016) notes that in the early centuries of the empire transliterated materials were also used, aiming only for oral proficiency, but that from the fourth century onwards this use declined. From this, it is evident that a mastery of both speaking and writing of Latin became essential to the upper classes of the Greek East.

Priscian stood at the end of this tradition of Roman grammatical writings and Latin learning, which in the East assumed a particular focus on teaching Latin as a second language. In considering his contribution to the grammatical tradition, we need to take into account that he built his expertise and teachings on both the Greek and Roman grammatical tradition, not to mention the eastern Roman tradition, which is especially demonstrated in the *Ars*.

Following the path paved by the previous Latin grammarians, the Latin that Priscian taught in his work was the literary language mainly of the authors of the classical age. Nevertheless, Latin was still a living language among the Roman population of the empire; everyday communication was performed using different varieties of the linguistic *continuum*.[90]

Over the centuries the gap between the standard language and the spoken language had increased, and, at the time Priscian wrote his *Ars*, the teaching of a highly

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[89] See DICKEY (2010; 2012-2015; 2015a); DICKEY & FERRI (2010); CRIBIORE (1996; 2001); SCAPPATICCIO (2015).

[90] It is problematic to define "colloquial" and "literary" Latin, especially if one considers that these terms are usually associated, not without difficulties, with the concepts of "spoken" and "written" language respectively (see DICKEY & CHAHOUD 2010); in considering the language of the *artes* I regard it as a variety of written and literary Latin.

codified norm of language must have been a powerful marker of identity among the elite, since their everyday language will have diverged appreciably from the standard language.[91] Moreover, we cannot ignore all of the implications that applied to a speech community like that formed by the elites of Constantinople in the sixth century. The capital encompassed subjects from across the territories under Roman rule; Latin and Greek were not the only languages used in Constantinople. Greek and Latin elites were possibly educated in both the languages of the State and therefore lived in a complex diglossic context. As Versteegh (2002) says, "in a diglossic speech community there are no discrete varieties, but linguistic variation is organised along a *continuum* between the standard language and the vernacular. Both ends of the *continuum* present constructs: at the top the standard is the codified norm, and at the bottom end of the *continuum* the idealised vernacular consists in a conglomerate of non-standard features" (p. 68). The diglossic situation that distinguished the elites of Constantinople must be seen as twofold; we need to take into consideration two different languages and their respective varieties, whose features could interact on different levels within the domain of the same language but also between Greek and Latin and vice versa.

In this respect, members of the elite in the East were concerned both with learning the linguistic skills necessary to hold offices and positions of power, which could even consist only of a working knowledge of Latin, and with learning the prestige languages that were a mark of elite status, namely classical Attic and classical Latin. These high varieties were useful to read the ancient classics which formed the cultural identity of these elites, but also to perform occasionally poetry, history, and declamations.

In the next section I shall focus on Priscian's activity at the *auditorium* and on some connections that he was able to establish throughout his career. This will provide the relevant background necessary to understand the role he played in the cultural milieu of sixth-century Constantinople.

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[91] VERSTEEGH (2002) claims that in a speech community there is a linguistic *continuum* between a standard norm and a colloquial variety, the vernacular. He also points out that in modern scholarship the notion of "standard language" sometimes refers to a "codified norm of the language", and other times to the "target of the speakers in a speech community" (p. 55).

1.5 **Priscian's circle**

Priscian seems to have been at the centre of a literary circle which flourished during Anastasius' reign. We mentioned above (section 1.3) that Anastasius surrounded himself with Greek and Latin intellectuals; while he established learned men in charge of civil posts, he favoured also literary culture. It is worth tracing some of the members who had ties with Priscian because it will elucidate the status of literary studies and the nature of the relationship between the *auditorium* and imperial offices at that time. In this section, I shall also give an overview of Priscian's works before focusing on his role within the Latin grammatical tradition of late antiquity.

Priscian was probably already an influential teacher when Anastasius commissioned him a panegyric in his honour in 513. By then, he had probably already written the three short grammatical texts *De figuris numerorum*, *De metris fabularum Terentii* and the *Praeexercitamina* dedicated to Symmachus, whom Priscian met on occasion of the visit that Symmachus paid to Constantinople about 500 as Theoderic's legate.[92] The relationship between Priscian and Symmachus is explained on the basis of what seems to have been a commitment to recover Greek culture for Ostrogothic Italy led by the Roman senator (cf. section 1.3). Priscian's works shared "a single preoccupation with the use of Greek materials to explain Latin ones, and they are intended to encourage a renewal of scholarly interest among Latin-speakers in Ostrogothic Italy" (Zetzel 2018, p. 198).[93]

In particular, in the *De figuris numerorum* and in the *De metris fabularum Terentii* Priscian used Greek sources and parallels to make sense of the Roman signs used to represent numbers and weights, and for Terence's metrics, respectively. The *Praeexercitamina* is even more significant because it was a translation of a Greek treatise containing a set of preliminary exercises, in Greek προγυμνάσματα, in the education of the future orator. The oldest treatise on these rhetorical exercises goes back to the first century CE, under the name of the orator Theon. Other treatises were written by the Pseudo-Hermogenes in the second/third century (which is Priscian's source) and by Aphthonius, rhetorician of the fourth/fifth century from Antiochia,

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[92] See p. 45ff of this thesis. Cf. CHADWICK (1981); BALLAIRA (1989). ZETZEL (2018, p. 309) suggests that the three texts dedicated to Symmachus were written possibly even before Symmachus' consulate in 485, because Priscian did not mention Symmachus' titles in the preface.
[93] On this subject see also BALLAIRA (1989, pp. 41-53).

whose treatise became the most used both in the East, during the Byzantine period, and in the West during the Middle Ages (see Kennedy 2003).

Another work in which Priscian aimed at a transposition of Greek sources into the Latin tradition is the geographical didactic poem *Periegesis*, which is an adaptation of the Περιήγησις τῆς οἰκουμένης by Dionysius of Alexandria, who lived in the second century CE during the reign of Hadrian.[94] It is worth mentioning that Dionysius' Περιήγησις had already been transposed into Latin by the fourth century Roman poet Avienus, who modelled the 1393 hexameters of his *Descriptio orbis terrae* on the Περιήγησις. This is not the place for comparing the two Latin versions; nevertheless, they differ from each other in many respects, from the lexical and syntactic choices made by the two authors, to the general tone of the work. While Avienus' work seems closer to the classical spirit of the Greek model, Priscian's *Periegesis* shows that mix of the classical and the Christian that was typical of literary productions of late antiquity (cf. Nicks 2000, p. 194).[95]

Priscian's efforts to adapt Greek scholarship for Latin speakers are also evident in the eighteen books of the *Ars grammatica*, which in some respects consists of a fusion of *Schulgrammatik* and *regulae* genres. Priscian was able to bring together the Roman and Greek grammatical tradition in a comprehensive work that combined theoretical argumentations with a large corpus of data, literary quotations, and examples of language (see Law 2003, p. 88).

The publication of the work is dated to 526-527 and can be connected with an imperial sponsorship. Priscian's *Ars* was copied by one of Priscian's pupils, Flauius Theodorus,[96] who was also a clerk in an imperial office. Flauius Theodorus is known from his subscriptions to some of the books of Priscian's *Ars* which he was copying

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[94] For the Greek text of the Περιήγησις with English translation and comment, see LIGHTFOOT (2014). For Priscian's text, see WOESTIJNE (1953). The *Periegesis*, in 1087 hexameters, had the merit of making known Dionysius' work in the West during the Middle Ages given the fortune and the circulation of Priscian's work in the West. Dionysius' didactic poem was instead very popular in the East; it "was often copied and commented on. It would seem that the Byzantines retained the ancient taste for didactic poetry and used this text as an elementary handbook of geography" (Wilson 1983, p. 24).

[95] There is a first difference between the two Latin versions in their respective opening verses (cf. AVIEN. *Descr. Orb.* 1-10 and PRISC. *Perieg.* 1-4). While Avienus called upon the Muses, Apollo, the *Pierides* and the *Camenae*, and appealed to the whole pagan tradition, Priscian invoked a single *genitor, rex caeli* who might be understood as the Christian God, although there are not clear Christian epithets referring to Him except maybe for the verse (3) *in quas* [sc. *tellurem et undam*] *imperium mortalibus ipse dedisti* ("you yourself empowered the mortals to dominate earth and waters") which recalls the beginning of the *Genesis*.

[96] See MARTINDALE (1980, *sv.* Theodorus 63).

between 526-27. In these subscriptions Theodorus identifies Priscian as his teacher,[97] and himself as a *memorialis* of the *scrinium epistularum*[98] and *adiutor* of the *quaestor sacri palatii*. This fact is significant because it is evidence of the direct relationship between the *auditorium* and imperial offices, and of their mutual cooperation: the State protected and sponsored the higher education of elite members who would later administer the State. Teachers were key pawns in the process of self-promotion of the elites. Priscian was a teacher of the State and his work was worthy of being copied under the protection of the imperial authority.

While Theodorus, after his studies, entered one of the imperial posts, another of Priscian's pupils, Eutyches,[99] became himself a *grammaticus*. Notably, he undertook a career in teaching Latin too, most likely in Constantinople, attesting the importance of Latin studies also in the generation after Priscian. In his *Ars de uerbo* Eutyches calls Priscian *meus, immo communis omnium hominum praeceptor*.[100] Eutyches and Theodorus with their respective careers vouch for the outcomes of learning Latin in the East in late antiquity.

Priscian's production of teaching tools did not end with the *Ars*. We need to mention the *regulae* type treatise *Institutio de nomine et pronomine et uerbo* which dealt only with the inflecting parts of speech, and was therefore intended for beginners in Latin, and the *Partitiones duodecim uersuum Aeneidos principalium*, which analysed the first line of each of the twelve books of the *Aeneid*, and was based in turn on the Greek practice of analysis of Homer's verses (see Zetzel 2018).

Priscian's production was therefore directed to a diverse audience and designed accordingly for beginners of Latin or for a more advanced study of grammatical theories. Also, part of his production was aimed at the West, while another part was composed for an eastern audience. Notably, Priscian composed the *Ars* in the East and for the East, despite the fact that we are only able to record its influence and circulation in the West during the Middle Ages, and while the *Ars* was a legacy for the history of western linguistics, its emergence reflected eastern issues. A look at the whole of Priscian's production reveals his ability in different genres; he

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[97] "*Scripsi artem Prisciani eloquentissimi grammatici doctoris mei manu mea.*"

[98] He was therefore a bureaucrat (*memorialis*) of one of the three offices (*scrinia memoriae*, *epistularum* and *libellorum*) created in the late empire to administer the State. These imperial offices had legal, secretarial, and administrative duties, all of which were carried out without clear distinction between the *scrinia*. See JONES (1964, chapters 12; 16) and BARNISH, LEE & WHITBY (2001).

[99] See MARTINDALE (1980, *sv*. Eutyches 2), and ZETZEL (2018, n. 22).

[100] *GL* 5, 456.29-30.

produced poetical alongside pedagogical and theoretical works. A constant of his activity, however, was the attempt to merge Greek scholarship into the Latin tradition.

Now it is time to move to the direct analysis of Priscian's work and to account for his cultural assertions. One of the aims of this study is to understand better the cultural factors around which the elites built the perception of themselves in the sixth century, and I want to start by analysing the highly rhetorical preface to Priscian's *Ars*. This will give an insight into the cultural views of a key figure of the period and will define the theoretical frame which support Priscian's teaching. It is well known that the *Ars* had its dedicatee in the patrician and honorary consul Julian, who commissioned the work. The way in which the dedicatee is presented by Priscian will shed light on the factors that were substantial to the self-perception of elites.

1.6 **The preface to the *Ars*: in the footsteps of the Greeks**

Prefaces were special literary places where authors had the possibility to engage with their readership for various purposes. Priscian provided the eighteen books of his *Ars* with a preface, and although other grammarians had provided their treatises with an introductory statement,[101] its length and richness of contents is exceptional. The *Ars* therefore acquires from the beginning a particular status in the eyes of its author, who wanted to promote the product of his efforts as something more than a schoolbook. As this preface provides clues to the cultural framework in which the *Ars* was produced, a full translation of it is provided here first, followed by a series of considerations and comments which arise from a close reading of the text.

The preface gives an insight into the way in which Priscian designed and produced his work, as well as its purpose and intended readership. From these first paragraphs, Priscian pairs Greek and Latin together, points out the benefits of his grammatical exposition as an educational tool for the learned men of the elite, describes the method used to compose it, and asserts his authorship. The analysis of the preface will also help us to comprehend what Priscian does in the last two books of the *Ars*, which constitute a stand-alone part of Priscian's project.

> Cum omnis eloquentiae doctrinam et omne studiorum genus sapientiae
> luce praefulgens a Graecorum fontibus deriuatum Latinos proprio sermone
> inuenio celebrasse et in omnibus illorum uestigia liberalibus consecutos
> artibus uideo, nec solum ea, quae emendate ab illis sunt prolata, sed etiam

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[101] Cf. e.g. Charisius' and Diomedes' prefaces (*GL* 1, 1.1-2.2 and *GL* 1, 300.3-15 respectively).

quosdam errores eorum amore doctorum deceptos imitari, in quibus maxime uetustissima grammatica ars arguitur peccasse, cuius auctores, quanto sunt iuniores, tanto perspicaciores, et ingeniis floruisse et diligentia ualuisse omnium iudicio confirmantur eruditissimorum (quid enim Herodiani artibus certius, quid Apollonii scrupulosis quaestionibus enucleatius possit inueniri?) cum igitur eos omnia fere uitia, quaecumque antiquorum Graecorum commentariis sunt relicta artis grammaticae, expurgasse comperio certisque rationis legibus emendasse, nostrorum autem neminem post illos imitatorem eorum extitisse, quippe in neglegentiam cadentibus studiis literarum propter inopiam scriptorum, quamuis audacter, sed non impudenter, ut puto, conatus sum pro uiribus rem arduam quidem, sed officio professionis non indebitam, supra nominatorum praecepta uirorum, quae congrua sunt uisa, in Latinum transferre sermonem, collectis etiam omnibus fere, quaecumque necessaria nostrorum quoque inueniuntur artium commentariis grammaticorum, quod gratum fore credidi temperamentum, si ex utriusque linguae moderatoribus elegantiora in unum coeant corpus meo labore faciente, quia nec uituperandum me esse credo, si eos imitor, qui principatum inter scriptores Graios artis grammaticae possident, cum ueteres nostri in erroribus etiam, ut dictum est, Graecos aequiperantes maximam tamen laudem sunt consecuti. exemplum etiam proponere placuit, ne pigeat alios etiam a me uel ignorantia forte praetermissa uel uitiose dicta (nihil enim ex omni parte perfectum in humanis inuentionibus esse posse credo) sua quoque industria ad communem literatoriae professionis utilitatem congrua rationis proportione uel addere uel mutare tractantes. namque festinantius quam uolui hos edere me libros compulerunt, qui alienis laboribus insidiantes furtimque et quasi per latrocinia scripta aliis subripientes unius nominis ad titulum pertinentis infanda mutatione totius operis in se gloriam transferre conantur. sed quoniam in tanta operis materia impossibile est aliquid perfectum breuiter exponi, spatii quoque ueniam peto, quamuis ad Herodiani scriptorum pelagus et ad eius patris Apollonii spatiosa uolumina meorum compendiosa sunt existimanda scripta librorum. huius tamen operis te hortatorem sortitus iudicem quoque facio, Iuliane consul ac patricie, cui summos dignitatis gradus summa adquisiuit in omni studio ingenii claritudo, non tantum accipiens ab excelsis gradibus honorum pretii, quantum illis decoris addens tui, cuius mentem tam Homeri credo quam Virgilii anima constare, quorum uterque arcem possederat musicae, te tertium ex utroque compositum esse confirmans, quippe non minus Graecorum quam Latinorum in omni doctrinae genere praefulgentem. tibi ergo hoc opus deuoueo, omnis eloquentiae praesul, ut quantamcumque mihi deus annuerit suscepti laboris gloriam, te comite quasi sole quodam dilucidius crescat.[102]

Although the Latins have eagerly appropriated from Greek sources every type of rhetorical science, and indeed every illustrious branch of study, and I see them follow Greek footsteps in all the liberal arts, the fact is that they imitate not only the correct insights of the Greeks but also, misled by their love of learned men, some of their mistakes.

In this regard the ancient science of grammar in particular may be said to have gone astray. In the case of grammatical writers, the more recent they are, the sharper their vision: all experts agree that they were enormously talented and hard-working (for where could you find

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[102] *GL* 2, 1.1-3.2.

conclusions more certain than those of Herodian, or problems more precisely articulated than in Apollonius?).

In my view they have rectified more or less all the mistakes in grammatical science which were left in the commentaries of the ancient Greeks, correcting by means of clear rules of a systematic analysis; but since they wrote, no one on our side has emerged to transpose their work into Latin, and it seems to me that the study of [Latin] literature is falling into neglect owing to a lack of grammatical writers.

I have therefore tried - boldly, but not I hope recklessly - to transpose the precepts of the men named above, everything that seemed suitable, into the Latin language as best I can: a difficult task, certainly, but one appropriate to my office. I have also gathered together more or less everything that seemed important from the commentaries of our Latin grammarians, because I was convinced that it would be a welcome amalgam if, as the result of my labour, the best of scholarship in both languages were to be united in a single work; and I believe that no one can blame me if I follow closely the scholars who held first place among the Greek grammatical writers, when the ancient Latin grammarians, as I said, won great praise emulating the Greeks even when they were in error.

I also wished to publish an archetype, so that other scholars in the course of their investigations might feel free to add, with appropriate reasoning, anything omitted by me in ignorance or to change anything asserted in error (for I do not think that there can be anything, among human works, perfect in all respects), for the common good of the study of letters. For indeed, I was forced to publish these volumes more quickly than I wished by individuals who, ambushing the labours of others, furtively steal their writings in what amounts to a robbery, and by the disgraceful change of a single name in the title attempt to transfer the glory of the entire work to themselves.

I also ask forgiveness, however, for the size of the work, since it is impossible to cover fully such a large amount of material in a brief treatment; though in comparison to the ocean of Herodian's writings, and the long volumes of his father Apollonius, my own work might be thought of as an abridged version.

Julian, consul and patricius, having won your encouragement in this work I make you its judge also. The brilliance of your mind in every field brought you to the highest offices of the state; and indeed, the honour you derive from your elevated rank is less than the grace that you confer upon it. Your intellect, I know, stands with Homer as with Virgil, two men who achieved the pinnacle of art - and you make a third, since you share the nature of both, shining in every branch of learning of both the Greeks and the Latins. To you, therefore, patron of every linguistic art, I dedicate this work: so that if God grants any glory to this undertaking of mine, your companionship, like the beams of the sun, will make it grow brighter.

The first lines of this preface are particularly significant because they define the attitude of Priscian's readership towards their cultural tradition. In the changing world of sixth-century Constantinople Greek and Latin cultural factors shaped the understanding of culture by the elites and of their identity.

The Greeks had always put a particular emphasis on their culture and education (παιδεία) since the fifth century BCE. [103] With the formation of the Hellenistic kingdoms, the Greek elites ruling indigenous peoples started to construct a Greek cultural identity based on language and shared literary culture. The Greek cultural ideals and education were adopted by the Romans following the Roman annexation of the Greek-speaking world and became an integral element of Roman elite identity from the first century BCE onwards. Knowledge of Greek became essential, and was formalised also in school practice, as shown by the instructions given by Quintilian to an orator in-training.

As Whitmarsh (2005) explains, "according to Roman imperial ideology, culture was the exclusive province of Greece" (p. 13), and "to practise παιδεία was to strive for a very particular form of identity, a fusion of manliness, elitism, and Greekness" (p.15). Between the first and the third centuries the Greek elites in charge of the local government of the eastern cities subject to Rome fought for status within the new political order, and within this new political order developed the need for a strong compensatory Greek cultural identity.

Preston (2001) defines παιδεία as "both the formal education of the elite and the wider culture shared by the Greek local elites" (pp. 89-90). This common culture included "expertise in public speaking, knowledge, and therefore deployment, of a shared stock of historical paradigms and literary texts (or at least quotations from a canon of works and authors), an ability to use a highly artificial, 'Atticising' dialect of Greek, and a common aristocratic ethos". Some centuries later the relationship between Roman and Greek elites in the East was different, but the importance and the status of Greek culture and education still received a great deal of emphasis.

Priscian rehearses the claim that Latin speakers have always drawn on the Greek tradition in rhetorical science and in other fields of knowledge. He states that Latin writers have engaged with Greek sources in their own language (*proprio sermone*) and that they have imitated the Greeks in all liberal arts. Priscian asserts the well-known fact that Greek studies form a foundation of knowledge, and therefore, in these very first lines, seems to justify basing his Latin grammar on Greek sources.

The verbs that Priscian employs in the preface to describe the ways in which the Latins relate to Greek sources are *celebrare*, *consequi*, *imitari* and *aequiperare,*

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[103] See MORGAN (1998; 1999).

and are found in this order.[104] If we set out all the progressive steps of a supposed cultural relationship between two groups, we could use the verbs mentioned above to describe the ways in which one group comes into contact and engages with the other. We could use them to outline the progress of the relationship between the Romans and the Greeks, from the Romans' first dealings with the Greeks to equalling them. First, *celebrare* means "to frequent a place or persons" or "engage with something or someone"[105] and, in Priscian's case, is used to refer to the engagement with Greek sources; second, as a result of such a contact, *consequi* refers to the following of Greek tradition step-by-step, while *imitari* relates to the imitation that may arise from that, until a final equivalence with Greek sources (*aequiperare*). We could eventually return to *celebrare*, and look at its additional meaning of "to celebrate, honour" and "make renowned", so that the Latins could ultimately be seen as the ones who honoured the Greeks and their scholarship by spreading Greek knowledge through their cultural (and political) activity.

Saying that the Latins have eagerly appropriated from Greek sources every branch of study is an unambiguous claim from Priscian, who sets out and acknowledges the particular and fruitful relationship that unites Roman knowledge with Greek models and theories. Modern scholarship investigates retrospectively the Roman approaches to Greek culture; McElduff (2013), for example, presents the long history of the Roman approach towards Greek literary culture, from Livius Andronicus (*c.* 280/260 – *c.* 200 BCE) until Gellius (*c.* 125/128 – after 180 CE), focusing on the "theories of translation", which are expressed by many different Latin writers. Latin authors had turned to Greek models since the very beginning of Roman literature with Livius Andronicus and his translation of Homer's *Odyssey*.

Feeney (2016) speaks of the "contingency of Latin literature" because "the Latin project of systematically translating literary texts is not a natural or inevitable thing to happen, and analogies for it in the ancient world turn out to be hard to find" (p.17). Contacts and interchanges laying the foundations for a cultural relationship between Greece, *Magna Graecia* and Latium had occurred from Mycenaean times (Cultraro 2006, pp. 221-237).

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[104] *GL* 2, 1.3: *celebrare*; 1.3: *consequi*; 1.5: *imitari*; 2.11: *aequiperare*.
[105] As a second meaning, *celebrare* signifies "to celebrate, honour, praise".

More in general, since the beginnings of the Roman domination over the Greek speaking world the Romans' own feelings about their relationship with Greece and Greekness were mixed. Isaac's (2004) study of Roman views of Greeks highlights the complexity and ambivalence of Roman attitudes towards the Greeks. Although on the one hand Greek art and literature were admired and imitated by members of Roman society, on the other hand "Greek influence was sometimes even thought to affect the stability of Roman society" (p. 405). Stereotypes were applied, according to which the Greeks were artful, inconstant, faithless, swindlers, and effeminate (Isaac 2004, chapter 9).[106] In contrast, this narrative conceived the Roman State built on morality and manliness, which became markers of Roman national identity; many Roman authors insisted on the moral superiority of Rome in comparison with the Greeks (Edwards 1993, pp. 20-24). Cicero for example did not fail to grant Greeks great achievements in the arts and literature, but he also did not fail to point out the limitation of their moral disposition,[107] and already Cato the Censor had addressed his criticism to the Greeks of his own day while appreciating the Greeks of the past (Astin 1978, pp. 172-173).

We see that, from Priscian's perspective, which was the view of a learned man committed to educating members of the elite, the relationship between Roman and Greek cultures was a recognised and positive fact, which he could use in turn as a justification for the composition of his own work. If we look back at Cicero or Horace, for example, the relationship that they perceived between Romans and Greeks was to some extent problematic because they were in need of some kind of justification for their turning to Greek models.[108] Priscian instead looks at the Latin engagement with Greek culture as a truism;[109] it was a unique relationship driven by the love of the Romans for the great figures of Greek intellectual history (*amore doctorum*).[110]

This is quite different from what we read in Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* for example, where Cicero explains to Brutus, his addressee, the reason why he undertakes a philosophical work in the Latin tongue (*Latinis litteris*). Cicero says that it is not because "philosophy could not be learnt from Greek writers and teachers", but

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[106] This narrative in turn resembles the classical Athenian construction of "Greek" versus "barbarian".
[107] For evidence of some Cicero's passages, see ISAAC (2004, chapter 9).
[108] See MCELDUFF (2013, chapters 4-5).
[109] The verb used by Priscian to state and acknowledge the Latin engagement with Greek sources is *inuenire*, 'to find out, ascertain, acquire'.
[110] *GL* 2, 1.5.

because it has always been his conviction that the Romans "have shown more wisdom everywhere than the Greeks, either in making discoveries for themselves, or else in improving upon what they have received from Greece", and adds that when it comes "to natural gifts apart from book-learning they (i.e. the Romans) are above comparison with the Greeks or any other people".[111] With Cicero, the relationship with the Greeks is presented in terms of competition and challenge (McElduff 2013, p. 103), whereas Priscian heralds imitation of the Greeks in all the liberal arts (*in omnibus liberalibus artibus*) for the sake of wisdom and love.

Priscian also says that the unconditional love for the Greeks had led Roman writers also into mistakes and faults.[112] He is clear on this aspect; not everything that comes from Greece is faultless, and it is duty of any scholar to correct what has been wrongly stated.

The preface is also the place where Priscian asks for appreciation from his readership. He hopes to receive a praise even greater than his Latin predecessors because he chose to imitate the ultimate Greek authorities, namely Herodian and Apollonius Dyscolus.[113] Priscian presents himself as the one who corrects the previous Latin science of grammar, whose representatives are left by Priscian without a name. He aims to be for Latin studies what Herodian and Apollonius were for Greek studies, setting himself up as the one who pairs the best of the Greek grammarians. They purged and corrected (*expurgare* and *emendare*) more or less all the faults contained in the grammatical expositions of their Greek predecessors;[114] he will fill in turn the gaps that occur in the Latin tradition. He sets therefore a new course for Latin studies, with himself as their newest representative.

This claim to innovation by Priscian may be surprising to us, because we think of Priscian's time as the end of the *Latinitas*, and even more so because this claim originated in the East, in a mostly Greek culture where Latin was gradually disappearing even from the highest levels of administration. We have to consider that it was one thing to learn Latin for practical uses aiming for a career in the public

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[111] Cɪᴄ. *Tusc*. 1, 1; translation by Kɪɴɢ, J.E (Loeb). The opposition is between a kind of knowledge acquired by nature (*natura*) or through book-learning (*litteris*). *Tusc*. 1, 1.3: *doctrina Graecia nos et omni litterarum genere superabat, in quo erat facile uincere non repugnantes* According to Cicero, the Romans were instead superior for morality, rules of life, family, household economy, law and administration, art of war, basically for everything acquired by nature and not by learning (*Tusc*., 1, 1.2).
[112] *GL* 2, 1.1-7.
[113] *GL* 2, 2.6-11.
[114] *GL* 2, 1.7-13.

service, but it was another matter to pursue further Latin studies for the sake of individual cultural interests.

Priscian's action seems to have been driven at a practical level by the need to supply better learning tools, which may be the sign of a general impoverishment of Latin studies in the capital, a need which had to be addressed. Priscian in the preface laments that the study of Latin literature was falling into neglect owing to a lack of grammatical writers. However, it cannot be said that Latin was not an essential element in the education of civil servants. The group of legal experts who compiled the *Corpus iuris ciuilis*, for example, had to master Latin very well.

A first question that may arise is to what extent the neglect of Latin literature was just a personal concern which Priscian hoped to share with other members of the elite or reflected instead a more widespread feeling. A similar concern for the lack of care for Latin studies was shown for example by the grammarian Phocas (early fifth century CE). In the preface of his *Ars de nomine et uerbo* he also mentioned the neglected status of studies and the difficulty of engaging with students who clearly showed no interest at all in literature.[115]

A second question that arises is to know the aim of a grammar as comprehensive as the *Ars*. To what extent was the *Ars* a teaching tool in the narrow sense, aiming at teaching Latin, and what was instead its broader scope? We know that Priscian composed other pedagogical works more practical in teaching language, such as the *Institutio de nomine et pronomine et uerbo*; the *Ars* encompassed instead a broader learning objective which I will discuss in my study.

In designing his work, Priscian probably intercepted needs and interests that members of the elites had and was influenced by the linguistic framework of the capital. We have seen that from the fourth century, in the East, new teaching tools appeared with the aim to teach Latin to mostly Greek-speaking students. Between the fifth and sixth centuries we witness a shift from Latin to Greek which probably caused the loss of interest by part of the elite for Latin studies, and justified Priscian's concerns.

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[115] See *GL* 5, 411.2-6.

1.7 **Priscian's task: *transferre* and *colligere***

In this section I examine in more detail the nature of Priscian's task as it is recounted in the preface. It is significant that Priscian presents himself as the one who should take on the effort of transferring into Latin Herodian's and Apollonius' precepts by virtue of his position as imperial professor (*rem arduam sed officio professionis non indebitam*).[116] Priscian is probably referring to his specific position of professor at the *Capitolii auditorium* rather than to his general status of *grammaticus*. This claim of Priscian further underlines the connection between his profession and the imperial sponsorship of teaching which we have discussed above when considering the role of Flauius Theodorus in copying Priscian's *Ars* (cf. section 1.5).

At the beginning of his enterprise Priscian calls on the Roman practice of transferring knowledge from Greek sources. "Transferring" Greek culture seems to raise the prestige of and give validation to his grammatical work. If we look at the whole Latin grammatical tradition, this operation remains unique; we do not find other grammatical works that claim openly to be transferred from Greek sources. The interaction between Priscian and his sources reached levels that were unexplored by previous Latin grammarians.

Moreover, the task of transferring teachings of Greek grammar into Latin assumes an understanding of Greek and Latin that allowed such a transplant. He must have had a precise and peculiar understanding of Greek and Latin if he could claim to transfer into Latin the grammar of Greek. In order to explain Latin through Greek, Priscian's use and description of Latin must have been deeply shaped by Greek in the first place; it was not a mere act of translation from one language to another as is commonly meant with the term "translation". We need to consider that here it is the language itself that is being translated, and that this is therefore a metalinguistic process. We shall focus on this in the second chapter, where my study aims at analysing the linguistic conceptions that underlie the composition of the *Ars*, and especially of the *De constructione*, where the resort to Greek sources is more remarkable and evident.

In his approach to Greek sources Priscian shows himself as a Roman, who takes a path already mapped out since the beginnings of Roman literature by those

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[116] *GL* 2, 2.3.

who "transferred" into Latin Attic drama, epic, lyric poetry, philosophy, historical studies; as McElduff (2013, p. 146) says "translation and transforming Greek texts into Roman ones was a cultural duty and one that brought glory". The circumstances in which Priscian was working were clearly different from those of the late republican period when Romans were balancing increasing political dominance with cultural-literary catch-up. Priscian's approach must be interpreted in the light of the cultural attitude of members of the elite of Constantinople, who thought of themselves as Romans.

Priscian shows pride in what he has accomplished, and offers his *Ars* as a model (*exemplum*) to anyone interested in enriching their education.[117] He states that the treatise may be used as it is, or changed and improved, yet what is important to Priscian is benefiting the teaching profession generally (*communem literatoriae professionis utilitatem*). In a certain sense, Priscian, with these words, leaves his work as a legacy for future generations of learners and teachers: but what does this legacy consist of?

Priscian mentions two types of material used to write his *Ars*, with different origins: Herodian's and Apollonius' precepts, and excerpts from Latin grammatical commentaries. The fact that he does not name explicitly any Latin grammarian reinforces Priscian's claim to be *the* Latin grammarian. There is also a third source useful to Priscian, which is Priscian himself; he does not mention it in the preface, but at the beginning of the seventeenth book (in the opening lines of the *De constructione*) he puts himself as an additional source of authority alongside the newest Greek and the anonymous Latin grammarians.[118] Priscian's acknowledgement of himself as an authority at the beginning of the *De constructione* highlights the special status of this part of the *Ars* in his own eyes. It seems also that Priscian wanted to reinforce his role as an author by marking his own contribution to grammatical studies precisely where he could appear just a compiler, since it was in that part of the work where he followed Apollonius most closely. In the second chapter of this thesis Priscian's dependence on Apollonius will be examined with particular attention to this issue of authorship.

In considering the two types of sources used in the composition of the *Ars* (Greek precepts and Latin excerpts), we note an interesting use of verbs by Priscian

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[117] Cf. *GL* 2, 2.12.
[118] See *GL* 3, 107.4-108.4.

when it comes to referring to the act of drawing from and reusing such sources. Priscian employs *transferre* for the Greek precepts, and *colligere* for the Latin commentaries. This shows a clear difference in the way Priscian places himself in relation to the sources and to their Greek or Latin origins.

Transferre, which literally means "to carry over", "to bear across", is one of the terms usually employed by authors to mean "translation", since the Romans had no proper word to signify the practice.[119] With reference to writing, the verb may be used first as "to copy", "to transcribe", and then figuratively as "to translate". For example, a passage by Cicero from the *Second Speech Against Verres* illustrates the meaning of "transcribing".[120] Here, the orator brings an action against Carpinatius, a man of Syracuse and friend of Verres, and uses as evidence Carpinatius' accounts of receipts and expenditure, and claims to have "transferred" exactly every letter and erasure from these accounts into his books, in order to examine them better later. The "transferring" of words refers only to a change of medium, from Carpinatius' accounts to Cicero's books, and does not involve a change of language.

When the verb *transferre* is used instead to indicate that the transfer of words takes place between two different languages, the fidelity of such a transfer is not always intended in the way we now understand literal translation. Cicero, for example, would warn against the risk of translating literally, not only because writers should always pursue a good style, but also because they should maintain an autonomous literary personality, which was at risk otherwise of being eclipsed by the author of the source text if this was followed too closely (see McElduff 2013, pp. 108-9).

To signify a translation comparable to our notion of literal translation the words *ad uerbum* were usually added by Roman writers. For example, in Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, Eustathius, one of the characters of the work, is committed to debating on the figure of Vergil, and to quoting some of his verses which are translated almost word for word from Homer (*uersus ad uerbum paene translatos*).[121] If we read through the examples brought by Eustathius we notice that the Latin and Greek verses present a commonality of words and expressions "almost" translated *ad uerbum*,

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[119] For a survey of the various terms used by the Romans for "translation", see MCELDUFF (2013).
[120] Cf. CIC. *Verr.* 2, 2.77: *litterae lituraeque omnes assimulatae et expressae de tabulis in libros transferuntur*.
[121] Cf. MACR. *Sat.* 5, 3.1.

although Eustathius also points out that sometimes Vergil needed more words to express what Homer said more briefly because Greek is a "richer language".

However, when Roman writers referred to "translating" into Latin, they usually referred to a broad practice of reusing and adapting of Greek sources, of which they were aware themselves, and which we cannot always subsume under our notion of translation (cf. Bettini 2012; McElduff 2013).

The way in which Priscian means *transferre* will be the object of my analysis in the next chapter. Suffice it to say here that he does not limit the meaning of this verb by adding any expression that resembles the idea of a literal translation. Moreover, he is keen to point out that he also adds his own contributions precisely where he could have been charged with merely translating a Greek source into Latin, i.e. in the *De constructione*. Nevertheless, there is a clause in the preface that limits the extent of the verb *transferre*; Priscian aims to transfer into Latin not all the Greek precepts by Herodian and Apollonius, but only those that seem "suitable" for Latin (*quae congrua uisa sunt*).[122] This is again evidence that Priscian presents himself not as a mere translator from Greek, but as someone who has studied the matter before and has elaborated something useful and new for the reader. He himself has evaluated what was worthy and suitable to be transferred. Therefore, for Priscian, the statement that not everything was transferred into a new work answers to a need for self-expression and promotion of his own work, which finds numerous parallels in the Latin tradition.[123]

Such a self-acknowledgment of Priscian as an agent in the transmission of knowledge is clear also from the way he introduces the second of his sources for his work: the Latin grammatical commentaries. As mentioned before, the verb used for this scholarly material is *colligere*, "to collect together into a whole", "to assemble". Priscian's interaction with his sources is here different from before because these sources are in Latin and there is no need of a "transferring". What is still needed, however, is Priscian's labour in evaluating the source texts, and in choosing those that are indispensable (*necessaria*).

The rhetorical nature of the preface allowed Priscian to use another cliché of preface writing by referring to the labour that he exerted in composing the *Ars*. He

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[122] *GL* 2, 2.4.
[123] Cf. TER. *And*. 13-14.

states three times that what he was doing was a difficult effort, a *res ardua* and a *labor*.[124] We can assume that beyond the rhetoric of this narrative the composition of the *Ars* represented a laborious task for Priscian. It almost seems that he needed to stress this point as a further way to take ownership of the text, since it could appear to detractors as an unsubstantial and anonymous collection from other authors.

The outcome of his *labor* is a *gratum temperamentum*,[125] a welcome amalgam of the finest elements of both Greek and Latin grammarians. The word *temperamentum* is an interesting one because it refers to a mixing in due proportion, to a melange of different substances; we may translate it in Greek as κρᾶσις, which includes all the meanings of *temperamentum*, and is also understood in grammar as the combination of the vowels of two separate words into one single syllable. It is possible that Priscian could have had the word κρᾶσις in his mind when thinking of the duality of his sources. The verb used to indicate the realisation of this *temperamentum* is *coire*[126] which means "to form a whole by coming together", "to be united into a whole"; again, a term that insists on the unity of different parts together. There is no doubt that Priscian thought of his work as a composite product, and indeed, the whole *Ars* is an assemblage of Latin and Greek parts which interact and dialogue together. We shall see that although Priscian's work aimed to describe the Latin language, its design and character is far from being an expression of a monolithic linguistic community.

1.8 A charge of plagiarism

Another point that Priscian discusses in the preface relates to the issue of authorship. He states that his *modus operandi* in composing the *Ars* does not correspond with the behaviour of anonymous plagiarists. Priscian seems to ensure for himself and his work a good reception among his readership by contrasting his professional conduct with the conduct of certain thieves, who would have forced him to publish his *Ars* sooner than he wanted.[127] The charge against these plagiarists consists in pretending to have written the books of the *Ars* by changing Priscian's name in the title, so that they replace the actual author with themselves. This

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[124] See *GL* 2, 2.2;8;3.1.
[125] *GL* 2, 2.6.
[126] *Cŏĕo, -ūi/-ĭi, -ĭtum, -īre.*
[127] Cf. *GL* 2, 2.16-20.

unspeakable act of stealing someone else's work (*infanda mutatione*) contrasts with Priscian's conduct which consists instead in the traditional and accepted practice of reusing sources through transferring and collecting.

In commenting on the accusations of plagiarism found within Priscian's preface, McGill (2012) argues that "the rhetorical organisation of the passage indicates that Priscian wished to establish a firm binary between the legitimate research practices and plagiarism, the illegitimate opposite of productive borrowing" (p. 71). We are implicitly informed by Priscian's words that the way in which he reuses his sources is qualitatively different from the way in which he accuses plagiarists of dealing with his work.

Priscian's method is part of the ancient traditional practice of taking excerpts from previous works; this practice was not associated with an impoverishment of scholarship, and was a method shared by all: rhetoricians, historians or grammarians.[128]Although many authors had to defend themselves against accusations of plagiarism (see McGill 2012; Hathaway 1989), for classical writers "imitations was not lifeless copying, borrowing, stealing or gathering materials from others; instead, it was a process of digestion, transformation, combination and affiliation, as authors made new texts not out of nothing, or out of direct observation of the world around them, but out of the materials afforded them by the literary system" (Willis 2018, p. 43). The same practice of borrowing and collecting the work of others characterised the encyclopaedic writing of the Roman empire (cf. König and Woolf 2013).[129]

McGill (2012) assumes that Priscian's *Ars*, or part of it, was put by Priscian himself "into partial circulation, presumably by sharing his work among a private circle" (p. 71), but we might also think that part of Priscian's work circulated as lecture

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[128] We may recall two authors who lived in the sixth century and talked about the practice of making excerpts: the historian Jordanes and the chronicler John Malalas. Jordanes uses the following clauses to refer to his engagement with his sources, and to his own work: *ex dictis maiorum floscula carpens breuiter referam* (*Rom.* 1, 9), and: *cupio* [...] *ex diuersis uoluminibus maiorum praelibans aliqua floscula* [...] *in unum redigere et* [...] *gesta strictim breuiterque collegere* (*Rom.* 3, 4-8). Malalas in the preface to his *Chronicle* sets out the method he considers right (δίκαιον ἡγησάμην) for compiling his work. He provides an account of the events (ἐκθέσαι τὰ συμβάντα) from Adam until his own time using abridged (μετὰ τὸ ἀκρωτηριάσαι) material from his sources (chroniclers, poets and learned historians etc.). Just to give an example of a classical author, I quote Cicero's words at the beginning of the second book of the *De inuentione*: *omnibus unum in locum coactis scriptoribus, quod quisque commodissime praecipere uidebatur, excerpsimus et ex uariis ingeniis excellentissima quaeque libauimus* (*Inu.* 2, 2.4).

[129] Encyclopaedism was also a phenomenon in the Greek tradition first developed by the scholars at the library of Alexandria (see HATZIMICHALI 2013) and was to be a cultural mark of Middle Ages (see HATHAWAY 1989; KÖNIG & WOOLF, eds., 2013). A negative understanding of imitation arose in western scholarship following the Romantic idea of "genius" in the eighteenth century (WILLIS 2018, p. 42).

notes taken at the *auditorium* without being under his direct control. Priscian's accusations against plagiarists should also be read in the perspective of the official status and recognition accorded to Priscian's work, since the publication of the *Ars* was supervised and promoted by part of the state administration (see section 1.5). Priscian wanted for his comprehensive Latin grammar an official status which was granted precisely because its publication was under state control.

Moreover, being the target of plagiarism assumes, once again, a promotion of Priscian himself as legitimate author and his work as worthy to be plagiarised. Priscian's *Ars* therefore stands out against both the previous *artes* because they are dated or imperfect, and any illegitimate attempt to use it which does not acknowledge its author. Priscian seems to think of his work already as a canonical work on grammar which could be used for the purpose of advancing grammatical studies, and consequently literature studies. Such pedagogical intentions did not apply to the alleged thieves of Priscian's work. Here lies therefore another criterion for defining a plagiarist.

From the reading of the preface there seems to be for Priscian at least three differences between him and the plagiarists: the way in which previous sources are reused, with or without acknowledgment of the author, the context in which the work was planned to be published, with or without the official sponsorship of the State, and the ultimate reason for publishing such a work, this being the mere acquisition of fame in itself or the further progress of scholarship. Nevertheless, we shall see in the second chapter that Priscian's job, especially in composing the *De constructione*, consisted of a progressive appropriation of the source text and substitution of Apollonius' name with his own.

1.9 Greek origin of Latin

Priscian's claim to transfer into Latin some Greek grammatical precepts assumes the idea that Latin and Greek were similar in some respects, or at least compatible. This assumption is evident from Priscian's argumentation throughout the *Ars*, especially in the *De constructione*, but it was not new. Its emergence can be traced

back to the late republican period.[130] It is worth therefore giving a brief survey of the theory.[131]

The extant evidence shows that in the first century BCE the theory of a Greek derivation of Latin appeared among scholars and grammarians. The first representative of whom we are aware, who explained Latin vocabulary through Greek etymologies, was Hypsicrates of Amisos. He was a Greek grammarian, who arrived in Rome from Pontus probably after the Mithridatic wars (88-63 BCE) and composed a treatise that Aulus Gellius referred to as dealing with *quae a Graecis accepta sunt* (*N.A.* 16, 12, 5).

Hypsicrates was not the only Greek grammarian in Rome at that time who dealt with the Greek origin of Latin words; we also know of Tyrannion the Younger, who composed according to the *Suda*[132] a work Περὶ τῆς Ῥωμαικῆς διαλέκτου ὅτι ἐστίν ἐκ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς, and of Philoxenus of Alexandria, who wrote the Περὶ τῆς τῶν Ῥωμαίων διαλέκτου. Philoxenus moreover inferred that Latin was related to a particular Greek dialect, namely Aeolic, since the Romans were colonists of the Aeolians (οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι ἄποικοι ὄντες τῶν Αἰολέων).[133]

The linguistic association between Latin and Greek was carried out on the basis of a historical and ideological reconstruction of the Roman past which made the Romans of Greek origin and which we find clearly expressed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the first book of his *Roman Antiquities*. Dionysius (1, 60) lists the different nations (ἔθνη) that formed the Roman people (τὸ Ῥωμαίων γένος): the Aborigines, originally Greeks from the Peloponnese, the Pelasgians from Thessaly, the Arcadians led by Evander, the Epeans and Pheneats under the command of Hercules and lastly the Trojans, whom Dionysius says to be also of Arcadian origin (1, 61). He proceeds with the account of the foundation of Rome, saying that Romulus and Remus were instructed in Greek learning (1, 84) and eventually proclaims that Rome cannot be viewed as a barbarian city because no one will find a nation more ancient or more Greek (Ἑλληνικώτερον) than the nations that have formed the Roman people (1, 89).

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[130] For a study of prosopographies see ROCHETTE (1997, chapter 3).
[131] For a detailed presentation of this theory and further bibliographic references, see DE PAOLIS (2015); for evidence of this theory in the sixth century, see DMITRIEV (2018).
[132] *s.v.* Τυραννίων (1185).
[133] See DUBUISSON (1984, p. 60). Philoxenus' fragment is edited by Mazzarino (*GRFAC*, p. 396), and excerpted from Georgius Choeroboscus' scholia to Theodosius of Alexandria' s Κανόνες (see *GG* 4, 34.8).

Dionysius' account is biased by the attempt to give a positive image of Rome in the eyes of the Greeks, to eliminate the reputation of the Romans as a barbarian people, and to bring the Greeks to accept Roman rule. This "construction apologétique", as discussed by Dubuisson (1984), made use of the demonstration of the Greek origin of Latin as evidence of the alleged Greek origin of the Roman people. It is not by chance therefore that Dionysius concludes the first book of the *Roman Antiquities* by saying that "the language of the Romans is neither utterly barbarous nor absolutely Greek, but a mixture (μικτήν), as it were, of both, the greater part of which is Aeolic",[134] and adds that the Romans have lived like Greeks (βίον Ἕλληνα ζῶντες) since the foundation of the city.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus wrote and published the first book of his work at the very end of the first century, around 8/7 BCE as stated by him,[135] but only synthesised a theory that had been popular from the third century BCE among the Romans. He appeals to the most learned of the Roman historians as sources for his claim that the Aborigines, from whom the Romans were originally descended, were Greek. He draws in particular on the authority of Cato in the *Origines*, which was a history of the Italian cities from the origins up to 149 BCE in 7 books, and of Sempronius Tuditanus,[136] who was consul in the 129 BCE.

The legend of Evander, who arrived in Latium, and brought and spread among the local population the Greek language, had been already proclaimed by the first Roman historians, viz. Fabius Pictor and Cincius Alimentus, who wrote their work in Greek in the second half of the third century BCE.[137] Evidence for this historical reconstruction is found in a passage from the grammarian Marius Victorinus (fourth century CE), who refers to Fabius Pictor and Cincius Alimentus as transmitting the account of Evander who transferred (*transferre*) the alphabet to Latium.[138]

Among the Romans it was then Varro who elaborated a linguistic theory of Latin based on etymological studies. He was pupil of Stilo Praeconinus, a scholar and professed Stoic, who enriched grammatical studies and was deeply read in Greek and Latin letters.[139] Varro in turn improved and corrected Stilo's studies, as shown by a

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[134] D.H. 1, 90 (transl. by CARY).
[135] Cf. D.H. 1, 3.4; 1, 7.2.
[136] See *Der Neue Pauly*, vol. 11, col. 396.
[137] Cf. ASCHERI (2011, p. 65) and GABBA (1963, p. 191).
[138] *GL* 6, 23.14-22.
[139] Cf. CIC. *Brut.* 205; SVET. *Gram.* 3. For an exposition of the relationship between Stilo and Varro see DELLA CORTE (1970, pp. 23-38).

passage from Gellius (*N.A.* 1, 18) where Varro's words are quoted as follows: "[Stilo] gave false derivations of several early Greek words, under the impression that they were native to our tongue".[140] Varro committed himself to the attempt to explain Latin vocabulary through Greek etymologies, as Hypsicrates of Amisos, Philoxenus of Alexandria and Tyrannion the Younger had done,[141] and made also a contribution to the identification of the linguistic components of Latin,[142] as transmitted to us by John Lydus in his work *De magistratibus* (2, 13).

Lydus reports that Varro in the fifth book of his work Περὶ Ῥωμαικῆς διαλέκτου[143] defined what sort of word is Aeolic, what sort is Gallic, what is Oscan[144] and what is Etruscan. Also for Varro, Aeolic was the main component of the Latin tongue after the arrival of Evander from Arcadia in ancient times;[145] while most modern scholarship classifies the dialect of Arcadia as belonging to the Arcado-Cypriot group, Varro and the ancient grammarians had no conception of a dialect group comprising Arcadian and Cypriot, but modelled the subdivision of the Greek language on an ethnic subdivision. This subdivision comprised Ionic, Doric and Aeolic groups, and they listed the Arcadian within the Aeolic dialect.[146] Varro pointed to some phonetic similarities between Latin and this so-called Aeolic heritage, similarities that were confirmed by the historical account of the origins of Rome popular at that time.[147]

Dubuisson (1984) explains the spread of this historic and linguistic theory in the first century BCE by linking it to Pompey's interest in building up an appropriate

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[140] Transl. by ROLFE (Loeb).

[141] In particular Varro knew Hypsicrates' work. In a passage from Gellius (*N.A.* 16, 12), for example, Varro is shown as giving a different etymology for the word *faenerator*, a money-lender, which Cloatius Verus, a Roman lexicographer with antiquarian interests and contemporary of Varro, thought of Greek origin according to what he read in Hypsicrates' work. In the passage from Gellius, Varro does not mention explicitly Hypsicrates, but it is very likely that the Roman scholar, who was committed to explain Latin words through Greek etymologies, wanted also to correct clear mistakes made by his predecessors.

[142] See PASCUCCI (1979).

[143] This title could be referred to the *De origine linguae Latinae*, or to the *De lingua Latina*, or to a late epitome of the *De lingua Latina*; for an evaluation, see PASCUCCI (1979, p. 340).

[144] John Lydus' text reports the ethnic terms λέξις Αἰολική, Γαλλική, ἡ Θούσκων, ἡ Ἐτρούσκων. I follow PASCUCCI (1979, pp. 340-341) in the interpretation of Θούσκων as a corruption for the ethnic Ὀπικῶν or Ὄσκων, since Varro in his analysis used to derive some Latin words also from the Oscan tongue (see DELLA CORTE 1970, p. 38). Anyway, there seems to be no reason why Varro had to oppose Tuscan and Etruscan words, being Tuscan only a synonym of Etruscan.

[145] See LYD. *Mag*. 1, 5.

[146] For a survey of the major aspects of Greek dialects as classified by modern scientific study, see COLVIN (2010) and cf. Strabo 8.1.

[147] For example, Varro says about the word that means "apple": *malum quod Graeci Aeolis dicunt* μᾶλον (*L.L.* 5, 102), instead of the Attic μῆλον.

image of himself in the Greek East. He also explains how this theory, which eventually identified the Romans with the Greeks, declined soon afterwards on account of the rise of a strong Roman feeling of competition with the Greeks; "les Romains se tournaient de plus en plus vers une théorie qui faisait d'eux, à l'origine, non plus les parents, mais les ennemis et les rivaux des Grecs" (p. 68). The rise of this feeling of competition would be also testified by the turn to the Trojan myth in Augustan propaganda.

The cultural and linguistic circumstances in which Priscian lived consisted of a strong degree of interaction between Greek and Latin. The linguistic co-existence and contacts of Greek and Latin in the East was indeed a coherent background for the development of Priscian's linguistic theories. Nevertheless, we shall ask ourselves what Priscian's reasons and objectives were in his attempt to explain Latin syntax through Greek. During the late republican period, the elaboration of a theory that described Latin through Greek was due to ideological rather than linguistic reasons;[148] the Romans wanted to legitimise their status of new world power and build a new reputation among the Greeks based not on the idea of "barbarian" but on that of "kinship". Greek intellectuals, on the other hand, devised a cultural model of their own that was needed to understand the relationship with Roman power and the new political order (cf. Goldhill 2001).

We will be able to investigate Priscian's assumption of Latin being modelled on Greek in the next chapters, when I will consider specifically the books of the *De constructione*. In these books dedicated to syntax Priscian spelled out a theory according to which Latin syntax followed in some parts a *Graecus mos*. Was this due merely to the fact that he had a Greek model?

In the next section I am going to follow further Priscian's rhetorical narrative of the preface, and in particular the way in which he presents us the addressee of his work, namely the consul and patrician Julian.[149] This will give us the chance to reflect on the cultural implications that the reference to being Greek and being Roman had for Priscian.

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[148] For an account of the development of the idea of a Greek origin of Rome first among the Greeks and later adopted by Roman historiography see GABBA (1991, pp. 1-22).
[149] Cf. *GL* 2, 2. 24-31.

1.10 **Knowledge of Greek and Latin**

The identity Priscian gives Julian in the preface takes shape through a very specific trait: the deep knowledge of both Greek and Latin learning. This is the only feature of Julian's persona that Priscian highlights in a flattering rhetorical eulogy for his dedicatee, which leads to the description of Julian's nature as a combination of Homer and Vergil ([*Iuliani*] *mentem tam Homeri credo quam Virgilii anima constare*).[150] We learn nothing about the historical identity of Julian except that he acquired the highest offices in the administration of the State. Nevertheless, these personal achievements are related and subordinated to the brilliance of his mind (*summos dignitatis gradus summa adquisiuit in omni studio ingenii claritudo*).[151]

We learn instead about Julian's cultural identity which cannot be simplistically interpreted with the ethnic terms of "Greek" and "Roman". Julian's identity is revealed not by his provenance, but by his membership in the group of the bright and erudite persons who have Homer and Vergil as a cultural reference. Julian is juxtaposed with the two greatest identities of Greek and Roman cultural heritage. By putting Julian side by side with the two ancient poets, Priscian wanted to emphasise Julian's mastery of both Greek and Latin, and to promote at the same time his grammatical treatise as a helpful aid in achieving this objective. We know that in late antiquity knowledge of both Greek and Latin was important at a practical level, and that Latin was especially required for anyone aiming for an administrative and political career; the preface of the *Ars* became the place where Priscian could emphasise this requirement and expectation from members of the elite. We must remember that he addressed his teaching to the elite of Constantinople, and was part of this elite; he was one of the grammarians of the *Capitolii auditorium*, and committed also in imperial propaganda, as suggested by the composition of the *Panegyric* to Anastasius. Priscian was certainly driven by the beliefs and the expectations of his readership when he composed his work, and in turn his work itself served as a model for the elite.

What else can be inferred of the cultural narrative that underlies the description of Julian?

Although Priscian had stated at the beginning of the preface that Roman culture largely drew on Greek sources, when he directly addresses his readership (in the

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[150] *GL* 2, 2. 28.
[151] *GL* 2, 2. 25-26.

person of his dedicatee), he places Homer and Vergil on the same level. It seems that the programme to educate "barbarian" peoples that Greece had professed since the Athenian imperialism of fifth century BCE and thereafter promoted by the authors of the Second Sophistic was eventually accomplished in the elites addressed by Priscian. According to Priscian's rhetoric, Julian is not only put side by side with Homer and Vergil, but is presented as a third entity, composed of the natures of Homer and Vergil (*tertium ex utroque compositum*).[152]

Throughout antiquity Homer and Vergil were understood by any educated person as core figures of Greek and Latin cultures respectively. I am not interested in establishing the scope of the process that brought Greek and Roman elites to construct their cultural identity on their most illustrious literary figures; I would like instead to focus attention on the yoking together of Homer and Vergil. They formed a pair that became a cultural label for the elites of the Empire.

Homer was "the poet" par excellence already in the classical Athens: his works became the main subject of study of Alexandrian scholars,[153] and in the Second Sophistic he was placed at the heart of the Greek παιδεία and identity.[154] Vergil was appreciated and imitated by his contemporaries from the beginning, and his works soon entered the school curriculum. According to Suetonius (69-130 CE) it was the grammarian Caecilius Epirota, a freedman of Atticus, who first lectured on Vergil in the school he opened around 26 BCE, when Vergil was still alive.[155] In the same years in which Caecilius taught and Vergil was composing the *Aeneid*, Propertius, referring to Vergil's epic poem, wrote: "yield, oh Roman writers, yield, oh Greeks! Something greater than the *Iliad* is coming to birth".[156] Some years later, Ovid in the poem concluding the first book of the *Amores* presented a list of Greek and Latin poets who had become immortal through their works. Vergil is referred to by key words which represent each of his three poems, and his fame is associated with the destiny of Rome:

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[152] Cf. *GL* 2, 2.29.
[153] For a brief survey of the origins and rise of Homeric criticism see NOVOKHATKO (2015).
[154] A study of the cultural authority of Homer in the Second Sophistic may be found in KIM (2010), ZEITLIN (2001) and GOLDHILL (2001).
[155] SVET. *Gram*. 16: [*Q. Caecilius Epirota*] *primus dicitur Vergilium et alios poetas nouos praelegere coepisse* ("Q. Caecilius Epirota is said to have been the first to begin to lecture on Vergil and on other recent poets").
[156] PROP. 2, 34.65-66: *cedite, Romani scriptores, cedite, Grai! / nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade.*

"Tityrus and the crops and the arms of Aeneas will be read as long as Rome will be head of the conquered world".[157]

Vergil himself tied his poetry and fame to the work of Homer by reworking models and themes found in the Homeric poems; the successive literary criticism on Vergil, which started extensively in the fourth century CE with the commentary on Vergil's works by the famous grammarian Aelius Donatus, highlighted the particular debts of the Latin poet towards his Greek models, and especially Homer.

Between the fourth and fifth centuries CE appeared the works of Servius, who also wrote a commentary on Vergil's works, which incorporated the best of his predecessors, in particular Donatus, and of Macrobius, who in the *Saturnalia*, among a large number of other topics, covered the poetry of Vergil.[158]

It is particularly in the fifth book of the *Saturnalia* that Macrobius illustrated the Greek sources from which Vergil had drawn. The picture that results shows an author who was well acquainted with Greek literature: "don't suppose that any of the Greeks – even among the greatest authors – drank as deeply of Greek learning as the skilful Maro, or incorporated as much in his work"[159] says Eustathius to Evangelus, two of the characters in Macrobius' dialogue. The analysis of Vergil's engagement with Greek sources, especially Homer, carried out in the *Saturnalia* might be used as a paradigm of that cultural process (which I discussed above in section 1.6) that Priscian outlined in his preface when he described the progressive steps through which the Romans have been engaging with the Greeks: *celebrare*, *consequi*, *imitari* and *aequiperare*. According to the analysis in the *Saturnalia*, Vergil reflects the perfect learned Roman man suggested by Priscian. He "drank of Greek learning",[160] "the whole of his poem is shaped as a kind of mirror-image of Homer's",[161] "took over almost word for word some verses",[162] but "yet by choosing just the right spot in his own work to take over the earlier bard's words he caused them to be thought his

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[157] Ov. *Am.* 1, 15. 25-26: *Tityrus et segetes Aeneiaque arma legentur,* / *Roma triumphati dum caput orbis erit.* Some philological notes on these lines are found in GOODFELLOW (2015, pp. 43-45).
[158] An exhaustive and detailed survey of the Vergilian tradition is found in ZIOLKOWSKI & PUTNAM (2008).
[159] MACR. *Sat.* 5, 2.2: "*Caue Euangele, Graecorum quemquam uel de summis auctoribus tantam Graecae doctrinae hausisse copiam credas, quantam sollertia Maronis uel adsecuta est uel in suo opere digessit*" (transl. by KASTER 2011, Loeb).
[160] Cf. MACR. *Sat.* 5, 2.2.
[161] Cf. MACR. *Sat.* 5, 2.13.
[162] Cf. MACR. *Sat.* 5, 3.1.

own".[163] The literary criticism of late antiquity contributed to a view of Vergil as a peer of Homer. He symbolised the accomplishment of the long Roman challenge to Greek culture, and the subsequent assimilation of it. Eventually, Homer and Vergil constituted a single identity, symbol of a unified cultural world.

There is a Greek epigram belonging to the *Anthologia Palatina*, and composed by Christodorus of Coptus in the same years in which Priscian worked in Constantinople, which tells of a statue of Vergil that stood in the gymnasium of Zeuxippus, which was located in the heart of the capital. In this short poem Vergil is described as an ἄλλος Ὅμηρος.[164] This evidence for Vergil being addressed as a "second Homer" comes from a Greek writer, testimony to the fact that Vergil's status was by that time canonical not only within the Latin tradition.

The recognition of Vergil's authority as equal to Homer's in the East is totally different from Ennius' self-proclamation as Homer's "reincarnation" (cf. McElduff 2013, pp. 55-58). The yoking together of Homer and Vergil as expressed by Priscian in the preface seems to have been an established and recognised cultural marker at that time, and it went hand in hand with the pursuit by the elites of a twofold learning, Greek and Latin, with which they identified themselves.

From a rhetorical point of view, by comparing his dedicatee with Homer and Vergil, Priscian encouraged his readers to position themselves in relation to them. The picture that emerges portrays the effort of learned men of that time to identify themselves with the ideal of a man with a complete education in both Greek and Latin. This is a cultural marker that can be seen also from epigraphical evidence.

An example of learned man who was honoured and praised in the same terms with which Priscian addressed his dedicatee is represented by the poet Claudianus. He was honoured in 400 CE by the emperors Arcadius and Honorius with a bronze statue in the Forum of Trajan in Rome at the request of the Senate. The statue was accompanied by a Latin inscription terminating with a Greek epigram, which referred to Claudianus as the combination of Vergil's mind and Homer's muse (εἰν ἑνὶ Βιργιλίοιο νόον καὶ μοῦσαν Ὁμήρου).[165] This inscription has clearly an interesting

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[163] Cf. MACR. *Sat*. 5, 3.16 (transl. by KASTER 2011).
[164] Cf. *A.P*. 2, 414-415: "There shines forth the clear-throated swan, dear to the Ausonians, Vergil, breathing gusts of epic, whom the Tiber's sound, his native speech, trained to be a second, Roman, Homer" (transl. by PATON 1927).
[165] For the edition of the inscription see *IGVR* 1, 63 (= *CIL* 6, 1710). Claudianus himself mentioned the erection of this statue in the prologue of his *De bello Gothico* (*praef*. 7-9): *Sed prior effigiem tribuit successus aenam, / oraque patricius nostra dicauit honos; / adnuit hic princeps titulum poscente senatu*

parallel in the words used by Priscian to praise Julian, whose "intellect consists of both Homer's and Vergil's nature, both of whom had reached the pinnacle of success in poetry" (*cuius mentem tam Homeri credo quam Virgilii anima constare, quorum uterque arcem possederat musicae*).[166] Priscian's use of the terms *mens* and *musica* repeats νόος and μοῦσα in the inscription for Claudianus, suggesting that he might have known this epigram. Priscian might have seen the statue dedicated to Claudianus in Rome since it was placed in the Forum of Trajan which hosted the famous Ulpian library. The Ulpian library was added to the Trajan's Forum in 113 CE and had two separate sections for Greek and Latin literature. It was the most important library in Rome and was still extant and in use between the fifth and sixth centuries.[167] Riché (1972, p. 69), following a passage in Priscian's text, suggests that also the son of Priscian could have gone to research among the shelves of the Ulpian library.[168] It was therefore a great honour for Claudianus to have a statue of himself placed in Trajan's Forum.

The dedicatory epigram, which sang of Claudianus' intellect and poetical skills, acknowledged his mastery in both the Greek and Latin languages, and comes to have an even greater significance if we consider that it was surrounded by scrolls which contained the texts of Greek and Latin authors. We can think of Claudianus as

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("But my former success won for me a brazen statue and the Fathers set up my likeness in my honour; at the Senate's prayer the Emperor allowed the claim", transl. by PLATNAUER 1922, Loeb).
There is another inscription found in Rome that might be considered together with *IGVR* 1, 63, and relevant to our topic. It is *IGVR* 3, 1314, edited for the first time by MORETTI in 1975 in *Epigrafica* 37, pp. 72-74. There are several lacunas and it is not precisely dated. It seems to contain an epigram to a certain unknown Primitiuus, and, if the editor's restorations are correct, presents another example of the yoking together of Homer and Vergil: Πριμιτεῖβος / ἐνθάδε [Βιργιλίοιο νόος] | [κα]ὶ ἦτορ Ὁμήρου, / οὓς ἂν Ζε[ὺς ἐπέων πεῖ|ρ]αν καὶ μάρτυρα θείη ("here [lies] Primitiuus, Vergil's mind and Homer's heart, whom Zeus could set as models and witnesses of his verses"). Anyway, MORETTI (1975, p. 73) warns that he made the restoration Βιργιλίοιο νόος on the precedent inscription of Claudianus, although there were other possibilities.
[166] *GL* 2, 2.27-29.
[167] The library is still mentioned by Sidonius Apollinaris (430- c. 490 CE) in a letter (9, 16) which refers to the statue that the emperor Avitus installed in his honour between 455-456 CE among the writers of the two libraries (*inter auctores utriusque bybliotecae*). Later in the sixth century the poet Venantius Fortunatus (c. 530/40- c. 610) refers to the Forum of Trajan as the place where Vergil was read (*Carm.* 7, 8.26: "*Maro Traiano lectus in urbe foro*"), and where the "venerable Rome" used to hear *pomposa poemata* (*Carm.* 3, 18.7-8). RICHÉ (1972, p. 69) suggests that these two passages from Fortunatus could be just a "souvenir littéraire". It is possible that at the end of the sixth century Gregory the Great, pope from 590 CE, referred to the Ulpian library when he said that he could not find in the libraries of Rome Eusebius of Caesarea's *De gestis sanctorum martyrum* which was requested of him by Eulogius, the bishop of Alexandria ("*nulla in archiuo huius nostrae Ecclesiae, uel in Romanae urbis bibliothecis esse cognoui, nisi pauca quaedam in unius codicis uolumine collecta*" *Ep.* 8, 29).
[168] Cf. *GL* 2, 407.14-15: *filio meo Romae in praesenti degente*, and "*utinam Romae filius meus legisset auctores*". This second clause is an *exemplum* made up by Priscian to introduce the use of the optative subjunctive; it may therefore be only an example to explain grammar without actual implications. Cf. BALLAIRA (1989, pp. 55-56).

a clear representative of the eastern elite society of late antiquity which sought and took great pride in having an education in both Greek and Latin. Claudianus was from Alexandria and active between the fourth and fifth centuries in both halves of the Empire. He was of Greek origin and wrote at first Greek poetry, as for example the *Gigantomachia* and some epigrams now preserved in the *Anthologia Palatina*,[169] but he had also a thorough knowledge of Latin language and literature. He was one of the wandering poets presented by Cameron (1965) in his study. Claudianus represents a particular case among this group of learned poets because of the quality of his extant Latin works, for which he is ranked among the great authors of late Latin literature. In fact, he earned fame after moving to Rome around 394 CE and gained protection from the court members by composing panegyrics and poems for them. However, Claudianus' successful case is only representative of a wider model of life pursued by elite members in late antiquity, who were competing for the benefits deriving from a reputable social and civic position.

Further evidence of the self-representation of elites in late antiquity comes from many examples of epigrams on statue bases of late Roman governors. It was a common practice for city councils to set up statues with an inscribed base in honour of renowned members of the elite, benefactors, prefects, generals, local governors; these monuments are important evidence of the formal relations between cities and members of the elite, but also allow us to recognise specific cultural features, which were mentioned in the epigrams, that were expected from these officials.

A significant finding comes from the city of Aphrodisias in Caria, dated around 400 CE, namely the same period in which Claudianus' statue was erected, and was dedicated to a governor of eastern origin named Oecumenius. From an archaeological point of view, it was an exceptional finding because it was possible to reunite the statue and its inscribed base and to establish its original position in front of the *bouleuterion* of the city (Smith 2002). This is the text of the epigram:

> You who are expert in the laws, who have blended the Italian muse with the sweet-voiced honey of the Attic, Oecumenius, the famous governor, the friendly council of the Aphrodisians has set up your statue here; for what greater reward than that of being remembered can that man find who is pure in mind and deed? (Millar 2006, p. 28)

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[169] For an introduction to Claudianus' life and activity, see CAMERON (1970, pp. 1-29).

Oecumenius' description fits into the representation of elites in late antiquity: he was an expert lawyer, bilingual in Latin and Greek and engaged in literary productions. He was a local official, but as for officials who entered the imperial court and entourage, a Graeco-Roman education was a distinctive character and a welcome achievement.

Priscian seems to sponsor a ruling class educated at the highest levels, while we are told of certain officials who reached positions of power, who had allegedly received only a rudimentary education. Firstly, we know of John the Cappadocian, who was praetorian prefect between 532 and 541, and consul and *patricius*. Procopius of Caesarea[170] wrote in his *De bello Persico* that John "had no experience in liberal conversation and education. He learned nothing from his attendance at the grammarian's except grammar, and that badly".[171] Secondly, Procopius alleges that the emperor Iustinus was illiterate. In the *Anecdota* Procopius states that Anastasius' successor "was totally without knowledge of letters, and of his *a b c*, a thing which had never happened before among Romans".[172] Procopius' claims cannot be relied on as objective descriptions of those state figures, but nevertheless they convey the particular emphasis placed on education as an element of self-definition of the elites.

Therefore, in considering Priscian's writings, both the preface and the verses of the *Panegyric* quoted above (p. 38) stress rhetorically the connection between cultivated men and the establishment of the State.[173] The same features are shown in the late antique inscriptions in honour of elite members. Together, Homer and Vergil could be used as literary representatives of this Graeco-Roman culture. What was conveyed by this kind of self-referential narrative was the importance of being learned as a condition for any career ambition in state posts. Priscian identified himself as a

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[170] Procopius was born about 507 in Caesarea of Palestine and died after 555. He undertook legal and rhetorical studies and followed Justinian's general Belisarius in the wars waged in that period. He wrote the Ὑπὲρ τῶν πολέμων, the Ἀνέκδοτα and the Περὶ κτισμάτων as a witness.

[171] PROCOP. *Pers.* 1, 24.11: Ἰωάννης, λόγων μὲν τῶν ἐλευθερίων καὶ παιδείας ἀνήκοος ἦν. οὐ γὰρ ἄλλο οὐδὲν ἐς γραμματιστοῦ φοιτῶν ἔμαθεν, ὅτι μὴ γράμματα, καὶ ταῦτα κακὰ κακῶς (transl. by CAMERON 1967).

[172] PROCOP. *Anecd.* 6.11: ἀμάθητος δὲ γραμμάτων ἁπάντων καὶ τὸ δὴ λεγόμενον ἀναλφάβητος ὢν, οὐ γεγονὸς ἔν γε Ῥωμαίοις πρότερον τοῦτό γε.

[173] A connection between being learned and the task of governing can also be drawn from a linguistic point of view. The word that Priscian uses in the preface to refer to "grammarians" is *moderatores* (*GL* 2, 2.7). It is worth remembering that *moderator* can also mean "ruler", "governor"; *modus* is the "measure", the "proper order" that should characterise the attitude of a ruler, in the same way in which the expertise of a grammarian consists in the knowledge of the proper arrangement of words. It is therefore noteworthy that Priscian uses in the verses of the *Panegyric* the clause *iustum moderamen rerum* (*Pan.* 251) to refer to Anastasius' just government of the State, with which men like Priscian were associated.

member of those elites of Constantinople who were acquainted with Greek and Roman education at a good level, while a look at the writings of the time may reveal other examples of men who were praised for their education in both Latin and Greek.[174]

1.11 Conclusions

The political and cultural circumstances that characterised the first decades of the sixth century have been explained by scholars in terms of continuity and change between the traditional classical past and the transformations brought about by the spread of Christianity in all spheres of society and culture and by the contributions of new ethnic groups which started to become an integral part of the socio-political system of late antiquity. Assessing the cultural features of the period means to look mostly at the evidence that concerns the elites, especially the literary culture of the period and the use of language by the elites. This field of enquiry proves to be fruitful also in assessing issues of cultural identity in sixth-century Constantinople.

Although there was an intensification of Christianity in many aspects of intellectual and political life, the system of education was still mostly based on the traditional Graeco-Roman school system which had literary and rhetorical training as main focus. Moreover, from the fourth century in the east there developed new teaching tools which were suitable to teach Latin as a foreign language to mostly Greek-speaking students. Latin had become indispensable for members of the elite aiming at a career in the local and mostly in the central government and administration.

Pursuing law studies was probably one of the main reasons why Greek easterners undertook the study of Latin in the first place. Nevertheless, the first language of those entering the civil administration of the Empire or the army was Greek. The evidence brought by Millar (2006), for example, shows an eastern empire that from the fifth century functioned in Greek.

The sixth century was also a time of reorganisation and codification of knowledge, which can be explained again by the need of elites to redefine their relationship with the past. The *Corpus iuris ciuilis* was one of the products of this

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[174] John Lydus for example (himself a member of the elite) praised Phocas (see MARTINDALE 1980, *sv.* Phocas 5), praetorian prefect in 532, for his character and activity, and for being well-versed in both Greek and Latin (μάλα πρὸς ἑκατέραν παρεσκευασμένος παιδείαν; LYD. *Mag.* 3, 73), with a remarkable knowledge if compared with the majority of people (παρὰ τοὺς πολλοὺς ἀξιολόγως ἠπίστατο; LYD. *Mag.* 3, 73). A second example is represented by Craterus, who was a pupil of Priscian's pupil Eutyches (see MARTINDALE 1980, *sv.* Eutyches 2). Craterus is praised by his teacher for his mastery in both Greek and Latin (cf. *GL* 5, 447.4-14).

process of codification, and also presented those elements of change in the use of language that occurred in the sixth century. It is worth remembering that while the previous Roman laws were collected in Latin, all the new legislation was produced in Greek.

Priscian's *Ars* is a comprehensive grammar of Latin, drawing on the previous Greek and Roman scholarship on grammar. We recognise in Priscian's intentions set out in the preface of the *Ars* the ancient practice of collecting and gathering of knowledge. The narrative that underlies the preface fits well into the cultural and linguistic framework of the period. The reference to a twofold Graeco-Roman education reflects the traditional training of elites which builds on the values and paradigms of the classical past. This cultural formation was therefore inherent in the self-representation of the elites and was a marker of their identity.

Through Priscian's words in the preface we may perceive a subtle but distinctive nuance in the way he refers to being "Greek" and "Roman". When it comes to referring to the Roman cultural relationship and dependence on Greece, "Roman" and "Greek" denote two distinct (although connected) spheres, where Greece holds the first and authoritative place; on the other hand, when Priscian refers to the civic body of Constantinople, in the person of his dedicatee, and singles out his political achievements and status, he speaks of a Graeco-Roman unity, although he does so by means of the cultural reference to Homer and Vergil.

Assessing issues of cultural identity with the traditional ethnic criteria of being Greek or being Roman cannot fully explain the cultural amalgam of the period, where the community defined itself first of all by faith. Greatrex (2000) shows that "the notion of Roman identity was extremely elastic in the sixth century" and that "an increasingly important constituent of Roman identity was Chalcedonian Christianity" (p. 278). Moreover, the term *Hellenes* (Ἕλληνες) denoted commonly the pagans, showing how difficult it is for modern scholars to define the elites of late antiquity through ethnicity (cf. Page 2008).

Priscian's life and career reveal the importance of the traditional education for members of elite, sponsored also by imperial policies. Cultivated men could indeed aspire to the highest offices; there seems to have been a particular emphasis placed on the mutual benefits that involved learned elite members and the government of the State. For emerging elites of late antiquity, it was necessary to gain protection from political authorities, from the local governors to the emperor. This brought prestige

and respectability. Education and eloquence in particular were central in achieving this; better yet, eloquence in both Latin and Greek.

Priscian uses a cultural narrative that kept together Roman and Greek elements. While it certainly built on traditional views of derivation and imitation of Roman knowledge and arts from Greek culture, it reflected the new political and social system of the East. We can suppose that it reflected Priscian's cultural beliefs; it was an attempt to promote and renew Latin studies within a mostly Greek context, and yet he made Greek culture foundational to his work. We also need to consider that insisting on a Graeco-Roman background and on Latin learning was a deliberate choice; all aspects of society were giving way to Greek. Priscian's work constitutes therefore a suitable piece of evidence for the interpretation of issues of cultural identity in late antiquity.

In the next chapter I will consider the last two books of the *Ars*, referred to as the *De constructione*. It is here that we can see more effectively Priscian's engagement with Greek sources, in particular Apollonius Dyscolus.

Priscianus grammaticus et translator

2.1 **Introduction**

This chapter aims to look more closely at Priscian's transformation of his Greek originals and in particular to examine how he used his sources in the composition of the last two books of the *Ars*, the *De constructione*. While asking how it was possible to use a Latin adaptation of Apollonius' Περὶ συντάξεως to teach Latin syntax, this chapter aims to show that Priscian's approach to Latin grammar was deeply influenced by his study of Apollonius in particular. To do so, we will read the *De constructione* focusing first on the interaction between Priscian and Apollonius as authors, and then between the target text and the source text. This will provide the basis for the study of the pedagogical context and the audience shaped by the text, which will be discussed in the third chapter.

Priscian's activity at the *Capitolii auditorium* consisted in a targeted transposition of Greek sources and teachings into the Latin tradition, as he himself stated in the preface of the *Ars* (cf. section 1.7). This was true not only for his main work but, as we have recalled in the first chapter, transferring Greek knowledge into Latin was Priscian's aim also in the composition of other works; notably he modelled the *Periegesis* on the Περιήγησις τῆς οἰκουμένης by Dionysius of Alexandria, and the *Praeexercitamina* on the Προγυμνάσματα of the Pseudo-Hermogenes.

The *De constructione* is a fortunate part of the *Ars* for my study because it is possible to track more closely his main source. It conveys in two books (17-18) the matter discussed throughout three of the four books of Apollonius Dyscolus' Περὶ συντάξεως,[175] and for this reason it has been sometimes referred to as a broad translation from Apollonius. However, this is not what Priscian thought and said about his own work, and it would be a rather simplistic understanding of Priscian's work.[176] At the beginning of the seventeenth book Priscian repeats what he said in the preface to the *Ars*, namely that among various Greek and Latin grammarians he will primarily

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[175] For a brief list of parallel passages in Apollonius and Priscian, see JANNACCONE (1957). In the first book the Περὶ συντάξεως deals with the definite article and the relative pronoun, the second book continues the analysis of the syntax of pronouns, while the third deals with verbs and solecisms, and the fourth is on prepositions and adverbs.

[176] For some discussions on the relationship between the Περὶ συντάξεως and the *De constructione* see: JANNACCONE (1957, pp. 21-30); BARATIN (1989, pp. 367-376); GROUPE ARS GRAMMATICA (2010, pp. 15-24).

follow in the footsteps of Apollonius in his new study of arrangement or construction of words, but without omitting any of his own thoughts on the topic.[177]

It is worth remembering that Priscian's two books on syntax constituted an innovation of Latin studies of grammar. In books 1-16 of the *Ars* Priscian dealt with the traditional categories that we find systematised by Donatus in the fourth century, namely noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, participle, conjunction, preposition and interjection, although he followed a different order which was characteristic of Greek grammars (noun, verb, participle, pronoun, preposition, adverb, interjection and conjunction). Priscian's project to transfer into Latin the Greek findings on syntax was therefore unique and constituted an advanced work for his readership.

By reading the claims of teachers and scholars of fifth and sixth centuries, there seems to have been a genuine search for something new in teaching practice; new works were composed aiming at more efficient teaching and at transmitting and increasing knowledge.[178] What these scholars wanted to achieve was a work that could be useful to their readership. Moreover, looking at Priscian's readership, if we consider that "there is for most of [Apollonius'] work only one manuscript surviving and little trace of *scholia*, while the text itself is couched in technical language of the most abstruse kind" (Wilson 1983, p. 24), we might presume that Priscian brought back to the attention of eastern elites subjects which were falling out of favour in schools in Constantinople, and which he considered still vital for a complete and good education.[179]

As we mentioned above (p.14), Apollonius and Priscian also came to represent an inseparable pair in the history of western linguistics and through Priscian, "syntax,

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[177] Cf. *GL* 3, 108.1-4.

[178] At this time, there seems to have been a growing demand for new educational works, and as a result a group of intellectuals dedicated to developing them. A claim to innovation characterises Priscian's relationship with Greek sources. In some of his prefaces he openly claims to follow modern Greek authors, because they are pedagogically more efficient than the previous generations of professors. In the dedicatory letter to Symmachus of the three treatises *De figuris numerorum*, *De metris fabularum Terentii* and *Praeexercitamina*, Priscian writes that "younger professors are believed to have laid out more accurately and with a more proper subdivision those matters necessary to train young students in all the aspects of rhetoric" (*GL* 3, 405.12-14: *diligentius ea sophistae iuniores, quos sequimur, aptioribusque diuisionibus ad exercendos iuuenes ad omne rhetoricae genus exposuisse creduntur*), and again in the preface of the *Ars grammatica* he states that *auctores, quanto sunt iuniores, tanto perspicaciores* (*GL* 2, 1.7). A further example is Priscian's pupil Eutyches, who became himself a grammarian and wrote an *opusculum* on verbal conjugations. In the prologue Eutyches states that the most talented students always ask *nouas quaestiones*, and that human *curiositas* always desires *aliquid recens* to look into (cf. *GL* 5, 447.5-7). This is the reason, Eutyches explains, for writing a new tool for the study of conjugations.

[179] The situation differs for Dionysius Thrax' Τέχνη γραμματική which WILSON (1983) describes as the basic grammatical text of the period.

both Greek and Latin, enters the world of language science in the West" (Taylor 1993, p. 282).

In considering this pair, an analysis of the *De constructione* based on a comparison with its source text offers the possibility to take a closer look at the method of adaptation and translation followed by Priscian and at linguistic, cultural and ideological specificities which arise from Priscian's handling of his Greek source. In talking about this, it may be useful to carry out a preliminary brief consideration of the status of "translation" in modern studies in order to be aware of the different approach we must take in analysing Priscian's case.

As recent contributions in translation and reception studies have highlighted, we come across a prejudice of scholarship against the practice of translation: "given the reigning concept of authorship, translation provokes the fear of inauthenticity, distortion, contamination" (Venuti 1998, p. 31). In contemporary culture the translator "works to make his or her work invisible, producing the illusionary effect of transparency that simultaneously masks its status as an illusion: the translated text seems natural, that is not translated" (Venuti 2008, p. 5). The invisible presence of the translator enables individual readers to engage with classical literature; nevertheless, on a more select level, the status of Greek and Latin among scholars, and the existent cultural gap which separates us from the ancient world often prevent us from "suppressing the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text" when translating (Venuti 1998, p. 31). It is for this reason that certain words as *fides* or *mos* or παιδεῖα are often left in the original because they are thought to be untranslatable (cf. Hardwick 2003, p. 21). But on the other hand, it is this cultural gap that often forces the translator to intervene more decisively in their work in order to bring the source text close to the modern reader. With this in mind, we shall focus on Priscian's method of reworking of the sources which clearly differs from what we expect from a modern translator, but which stimulates a reflexion upon the meanings of authorship, audience, and translatability.[180]

A first important remark should be made: the *De constructione* "transfers" into Latin not a poetical or rhetorical work, as was the case of the *Periegesis* and the *Praeexercitamina*, but a grammatical work on the Greek language. There is a paradox

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[180] A collection of writings about the practice of translation from the Antiquity to the nineteenth century is ROBINSON (2002).

here in seeking to write a treatise on Latin syntax by using the syntax of another language as a model. A modern linguist would not explain the syntax of Spanish by using an Italian textbook on Italian syntax as a guide, but on the other hand I could mention my own experience, shared with educated compatriots, of trying to explain my mother tongue, which is Venetian dialect,[181] by assuming that it reflects Italian morphological, syntactic and semantic features, when it does not. Italian grammatical language and understanding are the only means I have to think of my mother tongue. I should also add that in view of the failure of my descriptions of Venetian dialect through an Italian interpretation, I have turned to French, which helps better owing to the similarity of some syntactic and semantic features between French and Venetian.[182] What is significant to me is that my experience with my mother tongue is not yet sufficient for describing its grammar due to a lack of a Venetian grammatical tradition and school practice.

In considering how it was possible to use a Latin adaptation of Apollonius' Περὶ συντάξεως to teach Latin syntax, we need to consider first the nature of ancient grammars.

2.2 Considerations about a Graeco-Roman syntax

What enabled Priscian to plan in the first place an adaptation of a Greek syntax as a completion of his Latin *Ars* was the fact that he could rely on the traditional type of grammar developed by the Greeks and adapted by Roman grammarians in the genre that we have described in the first chapter (section 1.4) known as *Schulgrammatik* genre, namely a mix of semantic, formal and functional categories organised in a hierarchical structure (Law 2003). The Latin grammatical tradition not only built on the grammatical notions identified by the Greeks, but also adopted the formal and logical structure of presentation of topics. It was therefore this underlying structure and conceptual framework that Priscian drew from Apollonius Dyscolus and applied

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[181] To be precise, I consider my mother tongue a subgroup of the Venetian dialect, spoken in the area around the city of Padua.

[182] An example that illustrates the difficulty that Venetian speakers have in explaining the grammar of their language concerns the way in which Venetian constructs questions, with the inversion of the normal subject-verb order, like in English or French but differently from standard Italian. I can confirm that, since Venetian grammar is not taught at school, no one is able to explain the form *gheto fato?* ("have you done?" 2 sg.) as the inversion of the ordinary *ti te ghè fato* ("you have done" 2 sg.); they will think of it simply as the translation of the Italian *hai fatto?*.

to Latin. The syntactic similarities between Greek and Latin enabled then Priscian to follow a Greek model even when talking about Latin usage.

Priscian transfers into Latin the definitions of the linguistic unit under discussion together with its properties. For example, when Priscian had to describe the use of relative pronouns, he easily adapted Apollonius' teaching because Greek and Latin did not differ in this respect. It is understood that the syntax of a relative pronoun always needs a verb to complete the clause, both in Greek and in Latin; in this regard Priscian writes: "it is necessary that, when following its antecedent, the pronoun *qui* as the Greek ὅς be referred not only back to the antecedent, but also be governed by a verb that follows, for example: *uirum cano, qui uenit*."[183] The rule given by Priscian describes correctly the use of relative pronouns in Latin, but it should be noted that the way in which he outlines the rule, by stressing the position of the pronoun between an antecedent noun and a following verb, depended on the idiosyncrasy of Greek grammatical thought which distinguished between prepositive and postpositive articles, the latter being to us the relative pronouns.

Apollonius in the passage that Priscian adapted needed to refer to the presence of a second verb when a postpositive article is used (accompanying a noun) because in Greek prepositive articles, namely determinative articles, can be used (accompanying a noun) without the need of a second main verb: τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τοῦ ᾄδοντος ἤκουσα ("I heard the man singing").[184] This is therefore an interesting example of Priscian's adaptation of the Greek grammatical framework. He reuses the way in which Apollonius described his topic and adapts it to Latin.

This brings us to understand Priscian's conception of what language was to him. The way language is described by Priscian might lead to the interpretation of his treatise as almost a "universal grammar",[185] that is, as a description of principles and rules that are common to all languages. What we may understand from the analysis of the interaction between Priscian and Apollonius, and of the ways in which the former engages with the latter, is that we may speak of a universal way of describing grammar.

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[183] *GL* 3, 127.13-14: *hoc* qui, *quotiens subiungitur nomini, quomodo* ὅς *apud Graecos, necesse est non solum ad nomen praepositum, sed etiam ad id subiunctum alterum uerbum proferri, ut* uirum cano, qui uenit (Cf. *GG* 2.2/3, 116.10-117.3).
[184] Cf. *GG* 2.2/3, 116.7-9.
[185] "Universal grammar" is a theory elaborated by Chomsky and adopted by generativists of the Chomskian tradition. For an introduction to the Chomskian perspective on language study, see HAEGEMAN (1994).

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We shall see in the next sections that Priscian's and Apollonius' voices overlap because Priscian did not have other words for describing Latin syntax. Moreover, the learned speech community of Constantinople centred around the *Capitolii auditorium* was deeply shaped by the bilingual curriculum of studies of the capital; literary Greek and Latin constituted for the elites a unique language of culture which stood against the spoken forms of Latin and Greek. Priscian describes the grammatical rules of language which were what eventually distinguished the high standard language from the vernacular. Priscian's universal grammar was therefore the key to elite identity and was learnt to be able to decipher their coded twofold world.

The fact that Greek and Latin constituted a particular pairing for the elites in late antiquity probably had implications whenever translations between these two languages did not meet expectations. Greek and Latin were the two official languages of the Empire: it can be expected that elites relied on an established practice of translation of Greek and Latin linguistic structures; in the administration of the State civil servants must have produced a sort of translation guide both to ensure that official documents were issued correctly in both languages, and to enable an effective check on the accuracy of translations.

These expectations arose also from school practice of the sort that was common in the East, as attested by numerous examples of Latin learning tools for Greek-speaking students, such as those transmitted by the *colloquia* of the *Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana*,[186] where simple Latin texts were juxtaposed to the Greek equivalent.

An echo of the criticism that could be raised against translations that did not respect the alleged equivalence between Greek and Latin may be seen in the letter that Jerome wrote to Pammachius *On the best method of translating*.[187] We see from this letter that Jerome incurred charges of falsifying the original text of a letter sent in Greek by the pope Epiphanius to the bishop of Jerusalem John, which he translated into Latin.

Two passages from Jerome's letter may be useful to our argument. First, he defends himself by saying that "the apostles and evangelists in translating the Old Testament scriptures have sought to give the meaning rather than the words, and [that]

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[186] For a survey of teaching tools aimed at bilingual learning see DICKEY (2016; 2012-2015).
[187] HIER. *Ep*. 57 (ed. in *Patrologia Latina* by MIGNE 1859).

they have not greatly cared to preserve forms or constructions (*de ordine sermonibusque*)". It is understood that Jerome's critics preferred that greater attention should be given to form and syntax, and while they referred to a translation from Greek to Latin, Jerome gives examples from Hebrew to Greek, a practice that cannot be regarded as the same. Secondly, the quote above may be interestingly read in the light of a second passage where Jerome criticises a line from Aquila's Greek translation of the Old Testament by saying that such a line presented a "construction which neither Greek nor Latin admits". Jerome seems to pair Greek and Latin as forming a unique set of rules as a criterion of grammaticality. Thus, Jerome's criticism provides some insight into the idea of a Graeco-Roman syntax, whereas his critics blame him precisely because, apparently, he did not meet the expectations about it.

The same criterion of grammaticality based on a Graeco-Roman set of rules emerges explicitly, from time to time, also throughout Priscian's *Ars*, especially when Greek and Latin are compared with barbarian languages, as for example when Priscian speaks of barbarian names as Abraham, Ioachim, Iacob as being indeclinable, and notes that they cannot be regulated by any Latin or Greek grammatical rule unless they are transferred and adapted to the appropriate flexional system (*haec nomina nulla regula Latina uel Graeca sunt moderanda, nisi si transferantur in aliquam declinabilem formam*). [188] Although here the criterion of Graeco-Roman grammaticality refers to morphology, it may be also applied to syntax. From the reading of Priscian's text, and by considering Priscian's practice of adaptation of the source text, it emerges that the idea of a broad interchangeability between Greek and Latin linguistic structures was part of Priscian's linguistic understanding.

After these preliminary considerations, in the next section I am going to focus on the ways in which Priscian interacts with Apollonius in order to see the nature of his engagement with his source.

2.3 Priscian and Apollonius: two authors for one text

Priscian's choice to follow closely Apollonius' text not only affects the adaptation of Greek concepts into Latin, but also the school framework in which Apollonius had set his teachings, which was then converted for a different audience

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[188] *GL* 2, 148.10-11. The verbal clause *sunt moderanda* recalls the term *moderator* which was employed by Priscian in the preface to refer to the person of a grammarian. On the possibility of translating proper names between Greek and Latin, see BIVILLE 2005; cf. CASSIOD. *Inst.* 1, 15.3.

with a different teacher. In considering the issue of authorship that a task of adaptation presents, Priscian may be ultimately seen as replacing Apollonius as both the author of the treatise and the teacher, as a linguistic analysis of first-person clauses will show.

Learning tools like grammar books were often characterised in terms of a dialogical approach which was made by direct and indirect questions, hypothetical exemplifications, made-up sentences, expressions and clauses which were addressed by the teacher to his pupils, and were therefore expressed by verbs in the first or second persons ("as we have seen", "I have already shown", "if you say", "suppose", "someone may say", and so on).[189] All these occurrences are textual marks that bring readers to a fictive classroom where from time to time they can identify themselves with the teacher or the students. This was the case for Apollonius' Περὶ συντάξεως too; some of the textual marks mentioned above "clearly evoke a classroom in which a teacher is trying to keep order and teach a group of boys to read poetry and to write, sometimes asking the boys grammatical questions about the text being studied" (Householder 1981, p. 6).

Every time we come across a first-person clause in Priscian's text, namely a clause governed by a first-person verb, we inevitably associate the person speaking with Priscian, who is therefore the understood referent of that clause. The same argument applies to first person pronominal or possessive adjectives clauses. The underlying presence of Apollonius' text though creates an interesting overlapping of voices.

The period that introduces the subject matter of book 17 includes the kind of clauses just mentioned: [190] *Apollonii auctoritate* **sumus secuti**, **nostrorum** *non intermittentes necessaria*, **ipsi potuerimus** *addere*, *si quid* **ex nobis** *congruum inueniatur*, **non recusemus**. Priscian is here the *grammaticus* writer. The period that follows the passage just quoted instead, although it presents the same kind of clauses seen above, is an adaptation of Apollonius' voice and words;[191] Priscian is here the *grammaticus* translator. Priscian adopts the introductory period written by Apollonius, and transposes it seeking to render both words and meaning. Thus, he substitutes Apollonius as the person who writes and teaches.

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[189] This is a feature for example of Donatus' *Ars minor*, or of Priscian's *Partitiones* which is a metrical and grammatical analysis of the first verses of each of the twelve books of the *Aeneid*.
[190] Cf. *GL* 3, 107.23-108.4.
[191] Cf. *GL* 3, 108.5-10 and *GG* 2.2/3, 1.3-2.2.

This substitution may be also considered by looking at the referential function of language itself: according to the ancient grammatical science transmitted and delivered by Apollonius and Priscian, any first or second-person verb carries within a definite understood substance,[192] which in the case of the verbal clauses above would be the substance-Apollonius and the substance-Priscian. In fact, it was taught that the first step in the creation of language was the formation of nouns by imposing names upon things, so as to denote the inner nature of such things (σώματα – *substantiae*).[193] Subsequently verbs were invented to express the actions that are performed or undergone by substances, but whereas third-person verbs may be applied to countless substances (unless a pronoun is added to avoid ambiguity), first and second-person verbs are characterised by a very defined referent.[194]

Therefore, if we use the ancient grammatical teaching as a reading grid, the process of adaptation of Apollonius' text into Latin causes the substance-Priscian to replace the substance-Apollonius. The whole *De constructione* is built on the double role of the *grammaticus* Priscian, as a writer and as a translator. The two roles, which are generally unified in the text by the regularity of first-person clauses, appear separate every time Priscian mentions Apollonius in the third person and detaches himself from his source.

The analysis conducted for the two authors on the basis of the referential function of language is also true for the two texts when considered in their mutual connection. At *GL* 3, 108.5, when Priscian refers to his previous published books on the different parts of speech (*in supra dictis* [*libris*] *igitur de singulis uocibus dictionum* [...] *tractauimus*), he transfers the opening of Apollonius' Περὶ συντάξεως: ἐν ταῖς προεκδοθείσαις ἡμῖν σχολαῖς ἡ περὶ τὰς φωνὰς παράδοσις [...] κατείλεκται,

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[192] See for example *GL* 3, 116.27-117.2: *inest igitur intellectu nominatiuus in ipsis uerbis, quo sine substantia significari non poterat, in prima quidem persona et secunda definitus*; but also *GL* 3, 156.20 sqq. For evidence from Apollonius, see for example *GG* 2.2, 18.8-19.2.

[193] This theory which developed in grammatical treatises was rooted in the Stoic doctrine of the origin of language. The old debate dealt with whether words came by nature (φύσει) or were invented by convention (θέσει). The θέσει theory is first found in Plato's *Cratylus* (para. 389-90) where it is said that in a legendary past each community had a name-maker (ὀνοματουργός), who was the lawgiver (νομοθέτης) who imposed names upon things according to the nature of the thing named. Then, according to the Stoics nouns were formed by human imposition reflecting the nature of things. Against the θέσει theory were the Epicureans; the φύσει theory, according to which nature caused human beings to utter sounds, was expressed by Epicurus in the *Letter to Herodotus* (para. 75-6) and by Lucretius (5, 1028-90). See, BAILEY (1947, pp. 1486-97) and FREDE (1978, pp. 68-70); for further analysis on Epicurus and Lucretius, see REINHARDT (2008); cf. also Varro's reception of Stoic beliefs in ZETZEL (2018, pp. 38-46).

[194] See *GL* 3, 157.21-28.

and thus substitutes, in terms of linguistic referents, the previously published Apollonian lessons (αἱ προεκδοθεῖσαι σχολαί) with his own books.[195] Thus, Priscian ultimately claims, together with Apollonius' publishing formula, also Apollonius' teachings as his own. Nevertheless, as we shall see, in other passages Priscian mentions Apollonius' books together with the name of their author as separate from his own work.

The use of first-person clauses which credit to Priscian the authorship and ownership of the text corresponds to those passages in which Priscian finds some degree of compatibility between Latin and Greek grammatical theories or structures. As evidence of this, I will consider below a passage adapted from Apollonius in which Priscian presents a general claim that was true for both Greek and Latin; an analogy is seen between the four constituents of language, namely *littera*, syllable, word and sentence:[196] each element belonging to these structural constituents of language may be called prepositive (*praepositiuus*) or postpositive (*postpositiuus*) depending on the position that it occupies in connection with another element of the same class. The comparison between target text and source text shows that Priscian closely translated the words that constitute Apollonius' argumentative line, and kept verbs in the first person, while he replaced the Greek examples with Latin items that better satisfied the underlying theory; and indeed Priscian provided more examples than Apollonius to support his argumentation.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the choice to follow Apollonius as an authority in syntactic studies did not prevent Priscian from time to time from making Apollonius' words bow to his own opinions. In this section about prepositive and postpositive elements, Priscian had no need to change the source text when he claimed that all Latin syllables beginning with the clusters *gm*, *cm* and *chm* cannot begin words, and are therefore postpositive, because this was valid for Greek syllables too (line 5). The same applies to those syllables ending in clusters such as *ls*, *rs* or *ns* (line 6): the same examples are in Apollonius' text. On the other hand, since the aspiration in Latin is represented by the sign *h* but in Greek by a diacritic sign, he considers *h* as a single

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[195] At the beginning of book 17 (*GL* 3, 107.23) Priscian also uses the clause *in ante expositis libris* to refer to his previous books on the parts of speech, where the verb *expono* is a rendering of ἐκδίδωμι.
[196] Ancient grammatical analysis developed this subdivision of language components on the basis of the Stoic concepts of φωνή, λέξις and λόγος which were key concepts of their theory of speech; see LAW (2003, pp. 38-51). In the list as found in Priscian (*littera*, syllable, word, and sentence) the term *littera* is not a simple equivalent of our "letter" (cf. LAW 2003, p.61).

prepositive element to syllables, whereas Apollonius spoke of syllables (and not of single elements) beginning with aspiration and occurring only at the beginning of words (line 3).

At line 8 the substitution of the Greek ἄρθρα (articles) with *pronomina* should be noted, which indeed were considered to fulfil in Latin the functions of Greek articles,[197] and also the presence of the clause *uerba subiunctiua* in place of the Greek ἐπιρρήματα (adverbs), a choice that may be due to a misreading of the Greek text or to the state of the text that Priscian read. In fact, while Apollonius lined adverbs up with prepositive and postpositive articles,[198] Priscian talked about subjunctive (*subiunctiua*) verbs, where "subjunctive" translates the ὑποτακτικά of the previous Greek clause (and which at line 5 was translated instead with "postpositive"). By doing so, it also results that Priscian refers the relative clause that follows (line 9: *quae... demonstratione*) to verbs, as suggested by the further mentioning of [*uerba*] *imperatiua* and *optatiua* instead of referring it to the whole class of syntactic prepositives/postpositives as the Greek seems to indicate.[199] This is another example of how Priscian was able to adapt the conceptual framework of Greek grammar to Latin. I present both the passages by placing together those clauses that relate to each other to some degree.[200]

1	*Dicimus praepositiua elementa tam in consonantibus quam in uocalibus;*	Φαμὲν προτακτικὰ στοιχεῖα ἔν τε συμφώνοις ἔν τε φωνήεσιν.
2	*sed etiam in syllabis sunt quaedam praepositiua elementa, ut in diphthongis* a *et* e *et* o *praepositiuae sunt,* *ut* ae, au, eu, oe, i *uero et* u *postponuntur,*	ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν συλλαβαῖς, ἡνίκα τὴν διὰ τοῦ η καὶ υ προτακτικὴν συλλαβὴν ἔστιν εὑρέσθαι,
3	*et aspirationes uocalibus adiunctae in principio syllabarum inueniuntur,* *ut* habeo, Hermus, hircus, homo, hora, humus, humanus, *et* u *loco consonantis posita et* q *et* k *semper initio syllabarum ponuntur.*	καὶ ἁπάσας τὰς ἐν φωνήεσιν δασείας κατὰ τὸ κοινὸν ἔθος,
4	*syllabae quoque praeponuntur, ut* prae *in principio inuenitur semper dictionum:*	

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praemium, praeco, praetor, praedium, praelum.

5	*postpositiuae quoque, quae a* gm *uel* cm *uel* chm *incipiunt, ut* agmen, Pyracmon, Menaechmus*;*	ὑποτακτικὰς δὲ τὰς διὰ τοῦ γμ ἢ κμ ἢ χμ·
6	*finales quoque, quae in* ls *uel* rs *uel* ms *uel* ns *terminant, ut* puls, cohors, hiems, sapiens.	ἔτι τε ληκτικὰς μερῶν λόγου <τὰς εἰς τὸ> λς, ρς, νς, ἄλλας πλείστας.
7	*idem etiam in dictionibus inuenis.*	ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπὶ λέξεως τὸ αὐτό·
8	*unde et praepositiones nominantur et praepositiua pronomina et subiunctiua uel relatiua, nec non uerba subiunctiua,*	προθέσεις γοῦν καλοῦμεν καὶ προτακτικὰ ἄρθρα καὶ ὑποτακτικὰ καὶ ἔτι ἐπιρρήματα,
9	*quae magis ab ordinatione nomen acceperunt quam a demonstratione, quomodo imperatiua, optatiua.*	ἃ μᾶλλον ἀπὸ τῆς συντάξεως τὴν ὀνομασίαν ἔλαβεν ἤπερ ἀπὸ τοῦ δηλουμένου.
10	*ın oratione quoque hunc modum possumus inuenire, quando antecedentia, si coniuncta sequentibus fuerint, uera esse ostenduntur,*	καὶ ἐν λόγῳ δὲ ἔστι τὸ τοιοῦτον εὑρέσθαι, ὁπότε τὰ ἐκ συνημμένων ἀληθεύει προλημματιζόμενα τῶν ἐπιφερομένων,
11	*dum anteponuntur consequentibus per primam orationis coniunctionem, ut si aliquis dicat:*	ὥσπερ ἔγκειται κατὰ τὴν πρώτην τοῦ λόγου συναφήν, εἰ τῇδέ τις ἀποφαίνοιτο,
12	si ambulat Dionysius, mouetur Dionysius*; si enim conuertas, non est uerum;*	εἰ περιπατεῖ Διονύσιος κινεῖται,
13	*non enim, si mouetur Dionysius, et ambulat Dionysius necessario, nam potest et moueri et non ambulare.*	<οὐ μήν, εἰ> Διονύσιος κινεῖται περιπατεῖ· ἀντιστρέφοντος γὰρ τοῦ λόγου οὐκ ἀληθεύει τὸ ὅλον.[201]

The example above evidences one of Priscian's ways of engaging with the source text: he assumes the whole authorship of the teachings; but this was not his only *modus operandi*. There are times when Priscian refers to Apollonius in the third person, which can be a solution adopted for stressing a difference or a parallel between his work and Apollonius' work, or between Latin and Greek; but it may also be due to the search for validity or accuracy of his argumentation. We shall see some examples.

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[201] This is the English translation of the Greek text by HOUSEHOLDER (1981) with additional comments in brackets and no equivalents in the Greek: "among both vowels and consonants there are, as we know, some which regularly precede [and others which follow]; the same thing is true of syllables, e.g. the syllable ηυ occurs only at the beginning of words [since it arises only in augmented verb forms or as the result of crasis], and similarly all syllables beginning with *h* in ordinary Greek. And postpositive syllables include, for instance, all those beginning with the clusters γμ, κμ, χμ [which cannot begin words, unlike δμ, τμ, γν, κν, χν, which can], or those ending in word-final clusters such as λς, ρς, νς, etc. The analogy holds also with words; here we name a set of words 'prepositions' <'standing before'>, and speak of 'prepositive articles' and 'postpositive articles' and likewise adverbs which are so-called more because of their syntax than their meaning. And a similar thing can be found also for sentences, when a hypothetical syllogism is true, with antecedent before consequent, just as it is contained in the first premise of the argument, as, for instance, if someone should say: 'if Dionysius is walking, he is moving'; but it is false [if one says]: 'Dionysius is moving, he is walking'. When the two statements are reversed, the whole is no longer true."

In the seventeenth book of the *Ars* Priscian replaces the analysis of Greek articles with pronouns because they were considered to perform in Latin same syntactical functions. When Priscian came across the portion of Apollonius' text where articles were discussed, he acknowledged a problem of adaptation from Greek and the need for a mediation between the source text and the peculiarities of Latin. For this reason Priscian first introduces Apollonius in the third person, and thereafter moves to his own person and to Latin: "since Apollonius began his study of the arrangement of words, the Περὶ συντάξεως, by writing about the articles, which modify nouns, in the same way let us begin from those parts of speech that may be used by us in place of articles".[202]

In another section of the seventeenth book Priscian speaks of the possibility of having the possessive pronoun of the third person (*suus, -a, -um*) in the vocative case.[203] Although would seem it possible according to the nature of things (*quantum ad ipsam rerum naturam*),[204] there is no evidence for it in the usage of language; this is also true of Greek and shown by Apollonius in the third book of his treatise.[205] Priscian in the first place derives the discussion of the vocative of possessive pronouns from Apollonius (without openly saying so), and after resorts explicitly to him by mentioning the Περὶ συντάξεως to give a reference to the reader in support of the argument, which had become his own argument.

As the writing of the *De constructione* progresses, Priscian, while he still follows the structure and the argumentative line of the source text, detaches himself gradually from Apollonius' words and chooses to report indirectly what the Greek grammarian had discussed. After all, the *De constructione* conveys in two books the matter discussed throughout three of the four books of the Περὶ συντάξεως; Priscian had to abridge from time to time and to adjust the Greek text to Latin. The eighteenth

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[202] *GL* 3, 124.10-13: *sed quoniam Apollonius de constructione, id est* περὶ συντάξεως, *scribens ab articulis, qui nominibus adhaerent, coepit, nos quoque ab eis, quae loco articulorum sumi possunt apud nos, incipiamus.*
[203] See *GL* 3, 204.20-205.26.
[204] *GL* 3, 205.21-22; the whole passage is based on *GG* 2.2/3, 310.1-6. Nevertheless Priscian makes a change in his adaptation of the Greek that seems important to me; while Apollonius accounted "theory/rule" (λόγος) and "usage" (χρῆσις) as the criteria that must support a grammatical discussion, as in the case of the vocatives of possessive pronouns, Priscian speaks of *natura rerum* instead of the Apollonian λόγος. He also used the adverb *naturaliter* (205.16) with the same inference: it is natural, and therefore logical, that a speaker could address the thing they possess.
[205] *GL* 3, 205.24-26: *usus tamen deficit, quomodo etiam apud Graecos teste Apollonio* σφέτερε, *cum rationabiliter possit dici, in usu tamen non inuenitur. De hoc enim* ἐν τῷ περὶ συντάξεως *tertio clarius tractat.*

book of the *De constructione* is much less dependent on the Greek text than the seventeenth.

The reading of *De constructione* indicates a progressive disconnection between the persons of Priscian and Apollonius; if at the beginning of Priscian's treatise the two authors coincided, and so also for source and target texts, this relationship changes with the increase of Priscian's awareness of himself and of his agency, so that the authors and the respective works gradually separate from each other.

Priscian's abridged usage of Apollonius' text is evident for example also in the two lines introducing a section on the syntax of verbs which summarises what Apollonius had said about the infinitive mood: "Apollonius begins his exposition of the syntax of verbs from the infinitive mood, and shows that this verbal mood is general and can be used in place of any other mood".[206] This is a two-line introduction that constitutes in a nutshell the result of Priscian's own reading of Apollonius' teachings about infinitives. Priscian liaises therefore between the Greek doctrine and his audience; he is first of all a scholar who has attained this status through a first-hand study of the subject he teaches.[207]

Moreover, such an introduction to the syntax of verbs served to mark a divergence with previous Latin grammatical tradition, which placed the indicative mood at the beginning of any exposition on verbs; Donatus for example listed the indicative first. It was Apollonius who in the first place innovated the Greek tradition, although he still admitted that in school practice it was more convenient to begin from the indicative mood in order to facilitate learning.[208] Therefore, Priscian's choosing of

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[206] *GL* 3, 224.23-24: *ab infinito incipit exponere uerbi ordinationem Apollonius, ostendens, hoc uerbum generale esse et pro omni posse accipi modo uerborum.* Cf. *GG* 2.2/3, 320.1 sqq.; Apollonius called the infinitive mood τὸ γενικώτατον τῶν ἄλλων ῥημάτων.

[207] The process of appropriation of Apollonius' text by Priscian leads us also to consider an interesting case of indirect quotation. At *GL* 3, 144.7-9 we find an indirect quote from Aristarchus of Samothrace (the famous Alexandrian grammarian of the second century BCE), who had been directly quoted by Apollonius (cf. *GG* 2.2/2, 137.9-138.1). Priscian removes Apollonius as the intermediary and inserts Aristarchus' teaching into his text: *bene dicebat Aristarchus, coniuga esse personis pronomina*, as if it were a product of his own readings.

[208] Apollonius states in the third book of the Περὶ συντάξεως (*GG* 2.2/3, 327.13-328.6): "I haven't forgotten that in another book I picked the indicative as the primary verb form, in agreement with other scholars. But a more careful study of the argument has forced me to change my mind, always granting that we begin [discussion of the verb system] necessarily with the indicative mood, not because it is indeed primarily, but because it is more transparent, occurs frequently and can provide instructive cases of homophony, phonological changes and derivation" (transl. by HOUSEHOLDER 1981). The other book Apollonius is talking about was probably the now lost Ῥηματικόν (see LALLOT 1997, vol. 2, p. 193, footnote 148).

the infinitive as the primary verb form not only addressed the Latin tradition, but also engaged with a shared practice of teaching and learning; the authority of Apollonius saved Priscian from possible criticism by other teachers.

A last example of how Priscian dealt with the figure of Apollonius and his text is represented by a direct quotation from the Περὶ συντάξεως. While discussing impersonal verbs and the possibility of adding a subject to them, he says: *Apollonius in III* Περὶ συντάξεως *ostendit, in impersonalibus etiam posse intellegi nominatiuum ipsius rei uerborum, his uerbis*: μέλει Σωκράτη ὅπερ ἐπινοῶ καὶ αὐτὸ ἀναδέχεσθαι νοουμένην εὐθεῖαν τὴν κατὰ τοῦ παρυφισταμένου πράγματος ἐν τῷ μέλει [209] ("Apollonius shows in the third book of the Περὶ συντάξεως that in impersonal verbs it is also possible to understand the nominative of the matter itself of verbs, as per his words: *I think that in the example* μέλει Σωκράτη ["Socrates cares"] μέλει *admits an understood nominative, namely the one corresponding to the co-subsisting matter* [expressed by an infinitive]").[210]

It is clear how Priscian seeks to give a theoretical foundation to his argument; Apollonius' teachings, reported in the original words, serve here as a starting point for Priscian, as shown by the clause that follows Apollonius' words: *ex hoc possumus attendere quod* ("from what Apollonius said we may consider that"). It is interesting to note that for Priscian Apollonius' words prove in themselves the validity of the grammatical issue for Latin syntax too: *ex hoc possumus attendere, quod impersonalia similiter omnia, quibus nos frequenter utimur, quae ipsa quoque ab huiuscemodi uerbis Graecorum, id est* μέλει, δεῖ, χρή, *accepimus, teste sapientissimo domino et doctore meo Theoctisto, quod in* Institutione artis grammaticae *docet, possunt habere intellectum nominatiui ipsius rei, quae in uerbo intellegitur*[211] ("from the aforesaid words we may consider that in the same way all impersonal verbs, which we often use, and which too we take from Greek words of this sort, like μέλει, δεῖ, χρή, can be understood as having the nominative of the matter itself that is signified in the verb,

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[209] *GL* 3, 231.17-21; Cf. *GG* 2.2/3, 431.1-2.
[210] Apollonius and Priscian refer to the grammatical theory according to which an infinitive verb may be interpreted as the expression of the *ipsa res* conveyed by the verb. For example, *scribere* conveys *scriptura*, *legere lectio*, and so on (Cf. *GL* 3, 226.6 ff.). In the case reported above, Apollonius explains that in μέλει Σωκράτη the understood subject is derived from any dependent infinitive conveying the *res*. For example, μέλει τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν Πλάτωνι ("Philosophising is a care to Plato") is equivalent to φροντίδα Πλάτωνι ἐμποιεῖ ἡ φιλοσοφία ("Philosophy causes care for Plato"); see *GG* 2.2/3, 431.1 ff.
[211] *GL* 3, 231.21-232.1.

as it is shown and taught by my very learned master and teacher Theoctistus in his book *Institutio artis grammaticae*”).

The verbs of which Priscian talks here are: *curritur* which implies *cursus*, *ambulatur* which implies *ambulatio*, and so on. Although Priscian had previously quoted directly from Apollonius, the result is still the same: he takes possession of the source text first by moving to his teacher Theoctistus and secondly by re-adapting Apollonius' words into Latin as if they were his own; Priscian's argument ends with the claim that impersonal verbs *possunt habere intellectum nominatiui ipsius rei, quae in uerbo intellegitur*, which is an adaptation of ἐπινοῶ καὶ αὐτὸ ἀναδέχεσθαι νοουμένην εὐθεῖαν τὴν κατὰ τοῦ παρυφισταμένου πράγματος.[212] It is also interesting that Priscian places here side by side the Greek authority represented by Apollonius with the Latin authority represented by Theoctistus, who was also Priscian's teacher. There are two languages and two teaching traditions, but the grammar and the description of them are one.

2.4 **Target text and source text interactions**

The process of absorption of the Περὶ συντάξεως into the *De constructione* and the Greek cultural substratum in which this process took place influencing Priscian's activity lead us to consider some textual peculiarities of Priscian's work. In this respect, the first level of analysis that I wish to consider concerns the logical structure of the Latin text, which shows its relationship with the underlying structure of the source text. Priscian did not rely on the Greek text only for the transmission into Latin of grammatical theories or metalinguistic terms, but also adapted a range of logical and syntactical clauses employed by Apollonius. Here below is a table which shows some examples of the direct use by Priscian of Apollonius' argumentative language which can be found with some minor differences throughout the *De constructione*.

manifestum quod	σαφὲς ὅτι[213]
cum manifestus sit	προδήλου οὔσης[214]

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[212] It is difficult to translate the verb παρυφίστημι; it indicates the subsistence of the thing referred to beside or along with (παρά) the linguistic expression referring to it, and therefore is used by Apollonius to refers to the substance understood within verbs.

[213] Cf. *GL* 3, 108.16 and *GG* 2.2/3, 2.8; cf. *GL* 3, 139.29 and *GG* 2.2/3, 129.6, but cf. *GL* 3, 140.21 and *GG* 2.2/3, 132.2.

[214] Cf. *GL* 3, 122.3 and *GG* 2.2/3, 29.2.

et certum quod	καὶ σαφὲς ὅτι[215]
et apparet quod	καὶ φαίνεται ὡς[216]
et quomodo... sic etiam	καὶ ὡς... οὕτω καὶ[217]
sicut igitur... sic etiam	εἴπερ οὖν... ἄρα[218]
oportet tractare	δέον διαλαβεῖν[219]
non oportere	οὐ δέον[220]
oportere iudico	εὔλογον ἡγοῦμαι[221]

These clauses represent the syntactic fabric of Apollonius' way of teaching which Priscian adopted in his own argumentation, and they are indeed textual markers for detecting adaptations from the source text. In fact, when Priscian did not translate from Apollonius, his argumentative language was also different. He preferred to use the following sort of clauses to introduce his own thoughts: *nec mirum, necesse est, debet dicere, hoc interest quod, et sciendum quod, et notandum quod*. The underlying Greek text therefore affected Priscian's way of writing also at a logical and syntactic level and forced his style to change.

Moreover, in the process of adaptation of the Greek text Priscian often structured his periods following a syllogistic and causal line of thought, as was the case for the Greek text; grammatical issues are presented in such a way as to assert their truth and certainty. An example of this may be seen in the following passage which explains why the endings of personal or possessive pronouns are used to mark a case and not a person (which is instead expressed by the beginning of the pronoun).[222]

Et si terminatio obtinet maxime partes orationis, finis autem pronominis casus est, obtinebit per finem, ut *pronomen* uocetur, quippe quo imitatur

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[215] Cf. *GL* 3, 140.23 and *GG* 2.2/3, 132.5.
[216] Cf. *GL* 3, 150.9 and *GG* 2.2/3, 157.6, but cf. *GL* 3, 120.18 and *GG* 2.2/3, 26.10.
[217] Cf. *GL* 3, 108.21-22 and *GG* 2.2/3, 2.11-12.
[218] Cf. *GL* 3, 111.17-18 and *GG* 2.2/3, 7.13.
[219] Cf. *GL* 3, 124.5 and *GG* 2.2/3, 33.11.
[220] Cf. *GL* 3, 115.24 and *GG* 2.2/3, 16.7.
[221] Cf. *GL* 3, 141.3 and *GG* 2.2/3, 132.9.
[222] For example, in the sequence *mei, mihi, me* the letter *m-* is used to indicate the first person (different from the *t-* in *tui, tibi, te*) while the endings mark the cases.

nominis proprietatem, id est casum, quamuis etiam uerbi subiit proprietas, id est persona.[223]

If endings (of words) have most particularly the characteristic of defining the different parts of speech, and the end of a pronoun is a case, then it will be called "pronoun" (= *instead of nouns*) because of its ending, since the distinctive feature of the noun, namely the case inflection, imitates this ending, although the pronoun shows also a characteristic feature of the verb, namely person.

Priscian's reasoning is complex; his argument develops according to the following three-line form which characterised Apollonius' argument too:

1- word endings have the characteristic of defining the different parts of speech;

2- the end of a pronoun marks the case (which is a feature of the noun);

Therefore,

3- pronouns are called "instead of nouns".

Another example of three-line argument drawn from Apollonius may be identified in the following period. Priscian reports the reasons why in listing hierarchically the parts of speech the noun comes before the verb: physical objects (*substantiae*), to which nouns apply, exist before any acts or experiences which they may perform or undergo.

Ante uerbum quoque necessario ponitur nomen, quia agere et pati substantiae est proprium, in qua est positio nominum, ex quibus proprietas uerbi, id est actio et passio, nascitur.[224]

The noun necessarily precedes the verb because it is proper of substances to perform and be acted on, and substances are what nouns apply to. It is from nouns that the proper characteristic of verbs, i.e. performing and experiencing (in other words, to be active or passive) arises.

The three propositions of this logical argument could be:

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[223] *GL* 3, 140.25-141.2. Cf. *GG* 2.2/3, 132.5-8: καὶ εἰ τὰ τέλη ἐπικρατεῖ τῶν μερῶν τοῦ λόγου, τὸ δὲ τέλος τῆς ἀντωνυμίας πτῶσίς ἐστιν, ἐπικρατήσει ἄρα διὰ τοῦ τέλους τὸ καλεῖσθαι ἀντωνυμία, κἂν ῥήματος ἰδίωμα παρεισδύηται, λέγω τὸ πρόσωπον ("and if endings are the most characteristic bits of parts of speech, and the end of a pronoun marks the case, it will be called 'pronoun' predominantly because of this ending, even if it also puts on a characteristic feature of the verb, namely person", by HOUSEHOLDER 1981).
[224] *GG* 3, 116.26-28; cf. *GG* 2.2/3, 18.5-8.

1- in order for there to be an action, there has first to be a something (substance) for the action to be performed on or by;

2- it is nouns not verbs that express substances;

Therefore,

3- nouns are prior to verbs.

From the analysis of syntactic clauses and logical arguments above we may say that Priscian transferred into Latin not only a treatise on syntax, but also the syntax and the logical thought of Apollonius: Priscian's adaptation of a treatise on syntax began from the acquisition of the syntax of the text itself. This fact acquires particular significance in the light of the strong assumption of Latin being modelled on Greek that the *De constructione* conveys and reinforces the idea of a unique Graeco-Roman linguistic understanding. Priscian's translation technique tends to stick to the Greek whenever possible; it both finds justification from and encourages the idea of a *Graecus mos* upon which Latin was thought to depend (cf. section 3.6).

In addition to the use of syntactic and logical clauses calqued on Greek, Priscian resorted to Greek also for the metalanguage used in his argumentations. Grammatical metalanguage may be referred to as "l'ensemble de termes qui servent à désigner des unités de description, leurs manifestations, ou encore des propriétés de ces unités et de leurs combinaisons" (Lenoble, Swiggers & Wouters 2001, p. 278). This group of terms used to describe the grammar is strongly modelled on Greek terms, and Priscian often establishes such a relationship through glosses and equivalences between the Latin and Greek terms. It should be highlighted therefore that here lies, intrinsically, the reason why Priscian saw the Greek and Latin languages as sharing the same grammar: he described Latin through a set of terms which were Greek and created for a description of Greek. This comes with the caveat that Priscian thought of the two languages as related because he was brought up to do so in a bilingual and bicultural context, rather than from any independent reasoning of his own.

A concept or idea does not exist in a community if the language of that community is not equipped with the words to express that concept or idea. Therefore, the fact that the metalanguage used by Priscian was based on Greek must have affected in some ways the perception of the language described through such a metalanguage. In other words, Priscian's understanding of Latin must have been influenced in the first place by the (meta)language that was the only vehicle by which Priscian

understood Latin. We might see this process also in the light of the modern theory of cognitive construction grammar, according to which individual experience with language "feeds into the creation of grammar just as much as grammar determines the shape of usage" (Bybee 2006, p. 730). At a metalinguistic level, Priscian's individual experience with grammatical metalanguage feeds into the emergence of a certain idea of grammar, and since the describing metalanguage was Greek, the perception of the described language must have been affected too.

Thus, the terms that indicate the parts of speech are calqued on Greek: *nomen*/ ὄνομα, *uerbum*/ ῥῆμα, *pronomen*/ ἀντωνυμία, *participium*/ μετοχή, *aduerbium*/ ἐπίρρημα, *praepositio*/ πρόθεσις, *coniunctio*/ σύνδεσμος. Priscian accepted for example the explanation of the word ἀντωνυμία that pronouns are used "instead of nouns", and made this claim true for Latin too.[225] The same may be said of the arguments brought to justify the meaning of the words *subiunctiuus* and *optatiuus*.[226] Moreover, only the existence in Greek of patronymic nouns such as Ἀγχισιάδης ("son of Anchises") leads Priscian to deal with a class of nouns in Latin which he calls possessives: any of these nouns implies the understanding of *filius* plus the genitive of a proper name (*Anchisiades= Anchisae filius*).[227] The same can be said for the passage seen above about the position of a relative pronoun in a clause (cf. section 2.2), which assumes the distinction in Greek between prepositive and postpositive articles.[228] In all these cases the language used for descriptions of Latin data creates and allows the interpretation of such data in the first place.

It is also understood that not everything Greek could find an equivalent in Latin; for example, Priscian's claim that in Latin all parts of speech are grouped under the general name of *uerba* ("words", besides "verbs") derives from Apollonius' claim that is the term ὀνόματα ("words", besides "nouns") that is applicable to all parts of speech. In this case Priscian had to give a different explanation of why all parts of speech were named after the verb and not the noun.[229] Nevertheless, a Greek term with its meaning is still valid for a description of Latin grammar.

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[225] See for example *GL* 3, 148.25-149.4.
[226] Cf. *GL* 3, 239.13-241.6.
[227] Cf. *GL* 3, 155.19-20. In this case we have to consider that words of this form appeared in Latin literature, and that the learner needed to know about them in order to be a competent reader of (Hellenizing) Latin literature.
[228] See *GL* 3, 127.13-14.
[229] Cf. *GL* 3, 117.4-7 and *GG* 2.2/3, 19.2-6.

It can be said therefore that the grammatical metalanguage employed by Priscian is responsible to some extent for shaping the way in which he speaks about grammar. The Greek substratum of most grammatical terms must have affected consciously and unconsciously the conception of a unique grammar. The obvious differences between Greek and Latin are in turn responsible for outlining a distinctive feature of Priscian's text, which is revealed in the constant interaction and comparison between Greek and Latin.

It has been said that Priscian has proceeded in his argumentation in such a way as to "assimiler le latin au grec et annihiler les frontières entre les deux langues" (Biville 2008, p. 47). This process consists of different levels of interaction and merging between the two languages. The text of the *De constructione* occasionally shows for example an indifferent use of the Greek and Latin alphabets when it comes to write authors' names and titles of works.[230] Priscian sometimes uses even both alphabets within the same occurrence, switching between Latin and Greek characters and clauses (cf. Adams 2003, pp. 19-25). We find, for example: *Euripides in* Hecuba [...], *idem in* Bacchis;[231] *Xenophon* Ἀπομνημονευμάτων *primo*[232] and Ξενοφῶν Ἀπομνημονευμάτων ά;[233] *Demosthenes* ἐν τῷ Πρὸς Πολυκλέα;[234] Ἰσαῖος ἐν τῷ Πρὸς Εὐκλείδην.[235]

Moreover, throughout the treatise Greek and Latin quotations are juxtaposed and intertwined in a constant play of references between Greek and Latin usages and constructions. In this regard, not only does Priscian resort to Apollonius as a source of Greek quotations, especially from Homer, but also quotes Greek authors of his choice even in those parts of the *De constructione* where he does not follow Apollonius. The *De constructione* therefore emancipates itself on this aspect from the text of the Περὶ συντάξεως which was mostly based on and supported by Homeric quotations; Priscian alternates Latin with Greek quotations, prose with poetry, without any particular difference.

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[230] In saying this, we need also to consider the history of transmission of the text; not all the choices of writing can be attributed with certainty to Priscian. We need to consider that all manuscripts which we have of Priscian's *Ars* ultimately derive from the copy made by Flauius Theodorus; moreover, glosses were incorporated into the text.
[231] *GL* 3, 151.17; 20.
[232] *GL* 3, 171.24 and 3, 172.4.
[233] *GL* 3, 190.1.
[234] *GL* 3, 172.17.
[235] *GL* 3, 172.16.

Priscian's text expresses parallels and disparities either with reference to a *Graecus mos* followed by Latin or with clauses of the sort *Graeci dicunt... nos uero*, or *apud Graecos... apud nos*, or *Graeci quidem... Latini uero/ nos autem*. The *Graecus mos* can be regarded at this stage of my research as a teaching expedient responsible for a description of Latin grammar which assumes underlying Greek structures in Priscian's mind (cf. sections 3.5-6). In this respect, according to Priscian the Latin use of a genitive of description in the clause *magnae uirtutis uir* follows the Greek construction with the same genitive (μεγάλης ἀρετῆς ἀνήρ) while Latin would normally employ an ablative of description: *magna uirtute uir*.[236]

A second example of *Graecus mos* is the Latin use of an accusative participle where an infinitive would be rather expected; Priscian gives two examples from the fifth book of Sallust's *Histories*, where *intellego timentem* ("I understand him fearing") is said in place of *intellego* [*eum*] *timere*, and *uideo properantem* ("I see him hurrying") replaces *uideo* [*eum*] *properare*.[237] Priscian does not say it explicitly, but he probably refers to the Greek use of a predicative participle with verbs that signify a (mental or sensory) perception, as in the case of αἰσθάνομαι (= *intellego*) and ὁράω (= *uideo*).

As a last example of language imitation we can look at the substitution of an infinitive in place of a gerund in the genitive;[238] in this last case Priscian does not provide any examples, but refers to constructions of the sort of *tacendi tempus est*[239] with a gerund, and *tempus est iam maiora conari*[240] with an infinitive. In the comparison between Greek and Latin the gerund was felt as a peculiarity of Latin, since in Greek there is no gerund, and therefore the concurrent construction with the infinitive was labelled as a usage in the Greek style.

2.5 Conclusions

In this chapter we have considered Priscian's engagement with his Greek main source. A linguistic analysis of some passages from Apollonius' Περὶ συντάξεως and Priscian's *De constructione* has allowed us to consider a number of issues in relation

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[236] Cf. *GL* 3, 221.10-20.
[237] Cf. *GL* 3, 225.19-226.2. Priscian is our only testimony of these passages, which are fragment 5, 17 and 5, 18 in RAMSEY (ed.) (2015).
[238] See *GL* 3, 226.5-6: *Graeco similiter more infinita pro gerundii genetiuo proferuntur*.
[239] PLAVT. *Poen*. 742: "it is time to be silent".
[240] LIV. 6, 18, 13: "it is time now to attempt greater feats".

to the understanding of the meaning and scope of Priscian's "translation": what did Priscian transfer into Latin? How was it possible to Priscian to adapt a Greek syntax to Latin?

Priscian's text cannot be studied independently from his source text. There are a number of passages closely drawn from Apollonius which show a direct translation from Greek both from a lexical and a syntactic point of view. Priscian's translation strategies vary throughout the two books of the *De constructione*, and show different degrees of engagement with and adoption of the Greek. It is also possible to follow the merging and separating of Priscian's voice as a translator from that of Apollonius, which poses a question of authorship.

Moreover, the nature of *Schulgrammatik* type grammars and the fact that Latin grammatical tradition calqued its metalanguage on Greek allowed Priscian to reuse the conceptual framework of his Greek model and influenced him in the way he described Latin grammar.

In 1959 Jakobson set out in his influential article *On linguistic aspects of translation* that only a "creative transposition" of a text is possible when we consider the cognitive level of language (namely the meaning conveyed by the grammatical categories), which "not only admits but directly requires recoding interpretation, i.e., translation" (p. 236). The scope of Priscian's operation cannot be defined by an exact definition of translation, it is not (only) "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language";[241] it is rather a comprehensive "transposition" of an underlying conceptual structure and of a metalinguistic system. It is implied that this transposition was possible because Priscian saw elements of translatability (*quae congrua uisa sunt*),[242] concerning both the theory and the languages. The study of Priscian's "transposition" is a study of the layered ancient scholarship on grammar, and of the mutual Graeco-Roman transmission of this heritage.

On top of this, we must consider that in the East, from the fourth century, the school practice was concerned with teaching Latin to mostly Greek speaking students, and that a comparison between Greek and Latin grammars was functional to acquire knowledge of Latin. Priscian's use of the *illi*/*nos* ("they say/ we say") construction in

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[241] See JAKOBSON (1959, p. 233). This is the definition of what Jakobson labelled as "interlingual translation" or "translation proper", which is distinct from "intralingual translation" or "rewording" and from "intersemiotic translation" or "transmutation".
[242] *GL* 2, 2.4.

his descriptions of grammar establishes a connection with the previous Latin teaching tradition in the East; a quick look at other Latin grammarians shows that *illi/ nos* is a construction signpost of all the grammarians who worked in the East, namely Charisius, Dositheus, Diomedes and Cledonius, [243] which definitely reflects the linguistic background of their audiences.

Priscian's text shows a large use of Greek which is derived not only from the source text and from the eastern Latin teaching tradition, but also from the linguistic background of his audience. Claims of linguistic imitation of Greek and the use of the *illi/ nos* construction - while they constitute the textual framework on which the process of assimilation between Greek and Latin is based - also shape the audience for which Priscian wrote. In the next chapter I will focus on this audience and will consider to what extent the school practice in the East reflected the mutual integration between Greeks and Romans.

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[243] For information about the lives and activity of these grammarians see KASTER (1988) and ZETZEL (2018).

Graeci dicunt... nos uero: Teaching a Greek Audience

3.1 **Introduction**

In the previous chapter I looked at textual and metatextual interactions between Priscian and Apollonius; I analysed the ways in which Priscian adapted and adopted the Greek text into Latin, and focused on the use by Priscian of first-person clauses that ultimately refer to himself, the *grammaticus* Priscian, both writer and translator.

This chapter aims to look at the pedagogical context and at the audience that Priscian's text creates, in order to place Priscian's work in its eastern context and understand to what extent it reflects the cultural identity of its readership. Priscian *Ars* was not a classroom textbook aiming at learning Latin from the basics, as opposed to the *Institutio de nomine et pronomine et uerbo*, for example, let alone the two books on syntax, but reflected anyway the dialogic nature of the teaching-learning process, characteristic of ancient teaching tools. I shall focus on Priscian's first interlocutors, who stood at the other end of the actual teaching-learning process and were therefore the beneficiaries of Priscian's teachings.

To do so, I will first consider the dialogical approach between the teacher and his classroom revealed by the reading of the *De constructione*. The teacher and his audience are the actors involved in this exchange, and in the text are linguistically referred to in the form of personal pronouns. I will therefore look at the referents of the pronouns used by Priscian and will interpret them through the application of the ancient grammatical theory about pronouns. Seeing who Priscian refers to with the use of pronouns in his argumentation, will help to identify his audience with regard to their first language. While doing so, I will also draw a comparison between the ideal audience Apollonius addressed in his work and the groups that Priscian addressed in the *De constructione*, and show the extent of Priscian's change of audience when adapting the Περὶ συντάξεως into Latin.

Secondly, I will consider Priscian's audience by looking at the way he addressed them while giving grammatical explanations. The beneficiaries of Priscian's teachings are from time to time addressed with expressions such as *et attende*, *uide*, *proferri inuenis*, [244] other times, instead, Priscian carries out his teachings in a

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[244] See for example *GL* 3, 186.12; 257.4; 265.6.

comparative framework where the Greek use is opposed to Latin. I shall look at some of the teachings that Priscian offers to his students in order to establish their linguistic background, and therefore identity.

Finally, I will consider Priscian's text in the light of the teaching practice that developed in the East from the fourth century, in particular the practice of listing *idiomata* as a means of syntactic description of Latin as opposed to Greek. This will allow us to understand the framework of Priscian's comparison between Latin and Greek constructions within the *De constructione*, also in the light of ancient views of language contact and derivation, and to consider to what extent Priscian catered for an eastern audience.

3.2 The teaching-learning process

If we consider the ancient teaching tradition, it is often found that learning tools like grammar books are characterised by a dialogical approach that relates the teacher and his audience. This was true in antiquity as it is also today. A modern grammar book is usually composed of descriptions of grammatical topics, examples that help students' understanding, and often tips, recommendations or guidelines which are addressed to the supposed reader by means of a second-person set of linguistic forms.[245] This is the traditional perspective of any teaching material which reflects the communication exchanges that take place in an ideal classroom between the teacher and his students, what has been called a "performance sul palcoscenico scolastico" (Munzi 2011, p. 39). Anyway, this is not to say that we are allowed to assume that these exchanges register a form of colloquial Latin, only that they reflect the dialogic nature of the teaching-learning process.[246]

Moreover, when we consider a language learning tool such as a grammar book, language is at the same time the means of communication and the object of study. By an act of language, i.e. the instance of communication between a teacher and his class, grammar itself is practised. The reading of the *De constructione* shows a link between grammar and the act of communication, between grammatical descriptions and the

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[245] Even modern language learning platforms or mobile apps are developed on the interaction between the programmes and the users.

[246] CHAHOUD (2010) discusses the features of colloquial Latin as defined in literary studies and warns against the risk of assuming that literary texts belonging to a conversational genre (like letters or comedy) may record *tout court* colloquial features of language. Grammatical texts are neither literary texts nor belong to a conversational genre *per se*, nevertheless they can be regarded in the same way since they aim to describe the standard language and reflect acts of communication.

reality of a communication instance. Thus, in many respects ancient grammatical thought seems to develop from a description of language as actualised or performed in speech, which reveals the origins of grammar from Stoic discussions about the logical structure of sentences.[247] Also, from this point of view teaching grammar reflected the primacy that was given in antiquity to rhetoric, with the focus on both engaging with an audience and on analysing the process itself.[248]

That grammatical descriptions reflect the actors of an instance of communication is evident in those parts of the *De constructione* where Priscian considers the nature and functions (deictic, anaphoric and distinctive) of personal pronouns, which linguistically refer to the persons involved in a discourse.[249] The ability of pronouns to refer to a particular and unique person is mentioned by Priscian throughout the first book of the *De constructione*; this function of pronouns is acknowledged by Priscian as essential to communication because the effectiveness of any discourse is based on the possibility to identify the different performers in the discourse.[250]

As a consequence of the relation of pronouns to a specific person, he highlights the function of pronouns of deixis (*demonstratio*). Priscian refers to personal pronouns of first and second person as deictic "in the eyes" (*oculorum demonstratiua*)[251] because they refer to the speaker and addressee in the discourse;[252] he refers to third person pronouns like *ille*, *hic* or *iste* as deictic either "in the eyes" or "in the mind" (*demonstratio ad intellectum*)[253] depending on whether they refer to someone who is

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[247] For this, see LAW (2003) and SCHENKEVELD & BARNES (1999).

[248] In both Greek and Latin rhetorical traditions attention was paid to the audience and to means of persuasion; cf. Plato's *Phaedrus*, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and Cicero's *De oratore*.

[249] Priscian's theory on pronouns can be compared with Benveniste's studies on the nature of pronouns (BENVENISTE 1966); he outlined the intrinsic difference between the first and second person pronouns, which are indicators of persons, and the third person pronouns, which are not. In other words, Priscian's description of pronouns too reveals a distinction between *ego/tu* and the pronouns of third person. Whereas the former replace a proper name and therefore refer to determined persons in a discourse, the latter instead may refer to many and different persons, hence the existence of different pronouns of third person (*is, ipse, ille, hic*); if there had been a unique pronoun of third person, it would have been a cause of vagueness; cf. *GL* 3, 144.5-20.

[250] Cf. *GL* 3, 157.25-28.

[251] *GL* 3, 142.20.

[252] Cf. this passage from the *Colloquium Montepessulanum* (DICKEY 2012-15, vol. 2, p. 97):

δύο οὖν εἰσιν	duo ergo sunt	So, there are two
πρόσωπα	personae	persons
τὰ διαλεγόμενα,	quae disputant,	who converse,
ἐγὼ καὶ σύ.	ego et tu.	I and you.
σύ εἶ ὁ ἐπερωτῶν,	tu es qui interrogas,	You are the one who asks,
ἐγὼ ἀποκριθήσομαι.	ego respondeo.	I answer.

[253] *GL* 3, 142.19.

actually present in the discourse, or to someone who must be understood *in absentia* by the participants in such a discourse.[254] Also the anaphoric function of third person pronouns such as *ipse, is* or *se* is effective because of their function of substituting for a person mentioned earlier in the discourse. Finally, pronouns may be used to stress a distinction or opposition between different persons (*ad discretionem alterius personae*),[255] as in the example: ego *dico,* ille *autem non,*[256] where the pronouns *ego* and *ille* convey a contrastive and emphatic force which is derived, it is understood, by intensification of deixis.[257]

With this in mind, the *De constructione* may be interpreted as an instance of communication that takes place between different subjects on multiple levels; what we read in Priscian's books may be seen as a transcription of a teacher's speech to his class of students. We may consider this class in a narrower or broader sense. In what follows I examine the play of referents framing Priscian's text.

3.3 **Shaping audiences**

First, at an underlying level there is Apollonius Dyscolus and his ideal classroom which constituted his primary audience. Traces of the communication ongoing between Apollonius and his students can be detected throughout Priscian's text as I have shown above (see section 2.3); but a closer look at Apollonius' text may better define his audience.

In addressing his class Apollonius engages often and explicitly with the previous Greek grammatical tradition by naming and quoting his predecessors. From time to time he also calls the students' attention to his other works, and eventually creates a practical teaching tool for a homogeneous audience. Apollonius' course was entirely Greek-referential: Homer's words are either the starting point for grammatical

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[254] Although Priscian had drawn this argument from Apollonius (cf. *GG* 2.2, 135.12-136.4), he highlights the difference occurring between *ego/ tu* and *ille/ hic*, whereas Apollonius was interested only in the nature of ἐκεῖνος and οὗτος.

[255] Cf. *GL* 3, 118.16-22.

[256] *GL* 3, 141.19.

[257] Greek and Latin express this intensified/ oppositional deixis in a different way; a look at Apollonius' Περὶ συντάξεως may be useful. Greek expresses absolute deixis (ἡ κατὰ ἀπόλυτον ἐκφοράν δεῖξις) with enclitic pronouns: μου, μοι, με, and the oppositional deixis (ἀντιδιασταλτικὴ δεῖξις) with accented forms (ὀρθοτονούμεναι): ἐμοῦ, ἐμοί, ἐμέ. In Greek both morphology and syntax contribute to the understanding of the utterance; Latin instead has a unique form of personal pronouns and distinguishes therefore absolute and oppositional deixis only with the syntax and the coherence of the context. In his argumentation Priscian had to compare the Greek and Latin use; interestingly, by so doing, he was obliged to use the oppositional deixis he was explaining: *apud Graecos / apud nos autem*. See, *GL* 3, 141.6-19 and *GG* 2.2/3, 132.12-133.10.

discussions, or conversely are the students' target while grammatical discussions serve to lead students to the correct reading and interpretation of their poet.

We may assume that Apollonius' ideal classroom consisted of members of the Greek elite of second century CE, who identified themselves in the ability to speak and/ or write in a classicising language, according to the requirements of Atticism (see Whitmarsh 2005, chapter 3), even though Apollonius did not write an Atticistic grammar.[258] These elite members form Apollonius's broader audience.

An important part in Apollonius' argumentation is played by the constant recourse to everyday usage together with literary tradition and theory as criteria for establishing what is grammatically right or wrong.[259] It is understood that with the expression "everyday usage" Apollonius does not mean "vernacular"; rather, it must be identified with the Hellenistic koine which I regard as "an abstract concept" that "cannot be identified in any particular written document, or in anything that emerged from the mouth of a Greek speaker, formal or informal" (Colvin 2011, p. 39). Ancient grammarians, however, listed the koine among the five different kinds of Greek they recognised, and it was "common" in the sense that it represented the national standard; it started to be stigmatised as inferior to the Attic dialect with the emergence of Atticistic views on language (Colvin 2011). In Apollonius' work there is no particular stress on the Attic dialect, but every dialect finds its place along with the others without being stigmatised.[260]

This underlying Greek audience, both the ideal classroom and, more extensively, the elite of second century CE, was replaced by Priscian when adapting the Περὶ συντάξεως. Thus, a second level in understanding the instance of communication conveyed between the lines of the *De constructione* concerns on the one side Priscian and his ideal classroom, and on the other Priscian and his extensive

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[258] For a survey of the Atticism movement, see KIM (2017).

[259] The everyday speech is defined by Apollonius with expressions such as: ἡ ἀνὰ χεῖρα ὁμιλία (*GG* 2.2, 51.9), ἡ κοινὴ φράσις ἅπασα (162.7), τὸ κοινὸν ἔθος (9.1), καθάπερ ἐν τῷ βίῳ φάμεν (55.5), ἡ χρῆσις (60.14), ὁ συνήθης λόγος (171.2) ἡ ἐγγενομένη χρῆσις (198.9). We shall see that Priscian's focus was more on the *usus auctorum* than on everyday use (section 3.3).

[260] Apollonius Dyscolus lived and worked in the mid second century CE. His activity seems to precede the more rigorous and prescriptive Atticism that found its place in the lexicographic works of the second half of the second century, such as Phrynichus' Σοφιστικὴ Παρασκευή. Apollonius' account includes a multitude of references to different dialectal forms. For example, Apollonius brings evidence of the Doric characteristic feature of retaining a τ in the nominative plural articles τοί ταί, or in verbal endings as λέγοντι (= λέγουσι), φαντί (= φασί), (see *GG* 2.2/3, 69.1-3; cf. COLVIN 2007, pp. 45-47). He also mentions the Thessalian variant of the genitive singular in -οιο like καλοῖο (see *GG* 2.2/3, 217.11-12; cf. COLVIN 2007, p. 43), and the Aeolian form τίος in place of τίς (see *GG* 2.2/3, 146.15-147.1).

audience. It seems to me that while Apollonius' case shows a situation in which the students of his classroom idealistically belonged to the panhellenic elite of the second century CE, Priscian's case shows no perfect match between the limited and extensive audience. I shall focus therefore on these two different reading levels for defining Priscian' audience and see why the analysis of the linguistic expressions used by Priscian to address his audience eventually shows two distinct groups of referents.

If we consider the ability of Priscian's text to convey an act of communication, we must identify the personal pronouns in context in order to find the unique referents conveyed by such pronouns. In a real speech act situation there would not be any ambiguity or uncertainty for the interlocutors involved in determining the referents of personal pronouns used throughout their conversation. The situation changes when that act of communication is written down, because the linguistic signs denoting the persons involved in the communication, namely the pronouns, lose connection with their natural referents (cf. *cum scribuntur per se pronomina, nimium infinita sunt, scilicet cum sua materia excidunt*).[261]

Priscian gives us, as an example of the need to identify the natural referents of pronouns, the practice of writing at the top of any letter the names of the sender and of the recipient. Thus, by writing at the beginning of the letter: *Cicero Bruto*, we understand any coming *ego* as Cicero and any *tu* as Brutus; if we omitted the two names, Priscian argues, pronouns would be undetermined (*infinita*).[262] Now, the question is: who do the pronouns in the *De constructione* refer to? Can we identify their natural referents? The answer is double and dependent on the use Priscian makes of pronouns.

It is understood that sentences in Greek and Latin may have either an absolute or an oppositional force depending on whether personal pronouns are used or not in such sentences;[263] this is due to the fact that Greek and Latin, contrary to English for example, are pro-drop languages, and usually omit subject pronouns unless there is a need to distinguish and oppose two or more persons.[264] It should be noted that

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[261] *GL* 3, 149.12-13.
[262] Cf. *GL* 3, 149.18-23. The passage is drawn from Apollonius (*GG* 2.2/3, 155.10-156.7).
[263] The terminology "absolute" and "oppositional" force reflects Apollonius' description at *GG* 2.2/3, 133.1-3.
[264] Cf. HORROCKS (1987, pp. 143-147).

Apollonius first and Priscian after recognised this feature of their languages and supported it with detailed explanations and a large number of examples.[265]

In reading the *De constructione*, expressions that convey an absolute force shape Priscian's limited audience, i.e. Priscian's classroom, whereas expressions that convey an oppositional force shape the extensive audience. Absolute expressions consist of all sorts of verbal clauses in the first and second person, singular or plural, and of impersonal verbal clauses such as *oportet tractare*, *necesse est*, *sciendum quod*, and so on, of which I have talked above (cf. section 2.3); oppositional expressions instead consist of clauses of the type *Graeci dicunt... nos uero, illi... nos uero*. The absolute and oppositional uses of clauses refer to two different audience groups, and since they are strictly intertwined in Priscian's argumentation it appears difficult at first glance to decipher Priscian's targeted audience. To this end, it helps to examine the way in which Latin is explained.

3.4 Priscian's audience

The common opinion of modern scholarship on the linguistic background of Priscian's students considers the *Ars* to be addressed to Greek speakers learning Latin at an advanced level;[266] what is still needed though is to give textual evidence of this by analysing in detail Priscian's teaching material, and to see why this material serves to address a Greek-speaking audience.

A first example which can help us to identify the linguistic background of Priscian's students consists of the description and analysis of ablative absolute constructions in parallel with the Greek genitive absolute.[267] The form of words with which Priscian leads up to his analysis consists of the rhetorical framework in which Priscian opposes *illi* and *nos*; a Greek example is given first followed by Latin counterparts (*illi genetiuo, nos ablatiuo utimur tantum*). To shape the linguistic background of Priscian's audience is useful to look at the way Latin is explained and reworded following the Greek example: ἐμοῦ ὁρῶντος, τὸν παῖδα ἔτυψας which Priscian translates first with **dum ego uideo**, *puerum cecidisti* and then with the ablative absolute: **me uidente**, *puerum cecidisti*. The explicit temporal clause *dum ego*

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[265] See for example *GL* 3, 157.6 ff. and *GG* 2.2/3, 161.9 ff. Priscian speaks of *absoluta prolatio* (or *pronomina*) and *discretiua prolatio* (or *pronomina*).
[266] See for example LAW (2003, p. 86).
[267] See *GL* 3, 221.25-222.3. Priscian refers to ablatives and genitives absolute as constructions *in consequentiae significatione* ("which mean a consequence of facts").

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uideo stands between the known genitive ἐμοῦ ὁρῶντος and the ablative to be learned *me uidente*, and represents a rewording of the ablative absolute. After this *exemplum* Priscian gives three further Latin constructions characterised by a second noun in the place of the participle in the ablative absolute construction:

- ***Augusto imperatore*** *Alexandria prouincia facta est*

- ***Bruto defensore*** *liberata est tyranno respublica*

- ***Sulla uictore*** *perierunt Romani*

To each of these constructions Priscian adds a rewording in which the verb *esse* become explicit:

- *cum Augustus erat imperator*

- *cum defensor eius fuerat Brutus*

- *cum uictor fuerat Sulla*

We may suppose that through such paraphrases of ablative absolute constructions which lack the present participle of *esse* Priscian wanted to facilitate the understanding of the Latin use among Greek speakers.

The same could be said of the following part concerning the Latin usage of descriptive ablative which corresponds to the Greek genitive (*Latini frequenter et genetiuo secundum Graecos in hoc sensu utuntur*); Priscian paraphrases the verse from Terence containing the descriptive ablative: *forte unam aspicio adulescentulam,* ***forma*** [...] ***ac uultu****, Sosia,* ***adeo modesto****,* ***adeo uenusto***[268] ("by chance I see a young girl, Sosia, whose look was [not bad] and whose expression was truly modest and lovely") as follows: *uirginem, quae habebat formam ac uultum modestum et uenustum.*[269] The rewording probably helped the Greek speaker to understand better how Latin worked.

We may detect a particular attention towards a Greek-speaking audience also in the section dedicated to the subjunctive mood where Priscian presents usages of subjunctive both in subordinate and independent clauses mostly drawn from works of Latin authors[270] and sometimes supported by the evidence of *exempla ficta*. He extracts the verbal clause in the quotation and juxtaposes it with a Greek translation; I shall list a few examples of this technique:

- *Virgilius in III:* "eloquar **an sileam**?" ἢ ἄρα σιωπήσω;[271]

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[268] Cf. TER. *And*. 118-120.
[269] See *GL* 3, 221.10-24.
[270] *GL* 3, 241.3-267.5.
[271] *GL* 3, 249.20. The verse quoted is VERG. *Aen*. 3, 39.

- *Idem* (scil. *Terentius*) *in eadem* (scil. in *Andria*): "consilium meum / cognosces **et quid facere in hac re te uelim**", καὶ τί ποιεῖν ἐν τούτῳ τῷ πράγματί σε ἄρα βουλοίμην.[272]

- *Docuissem, si discere uoluisses.* Ἐδίδαξα ἄν, εἰ μαθεῖν ἠθέλησας.[273]

The most interesting part of this section contains a few extracts from the first book of Cicero's *Second Speech Against Verres* with all the subjunctives followed by the Greek counterpart.[274] I provide below only a few verbal clauses, though Priscian quotes extensively from Cicero's speech. It appears that he had direct access to Cicero's text. He extracts quotations without following a precise order; starting with paragraphs 145 to 157, then going back to paragraph 90, then to paragraphs 103 to 154, and ending with the beginning of the second speech, paragraphs 1 to 9.[275]

- *numquam petissem*	οὐκ ἂν ᾔτησα
- *non esset usus*	οὐκ ἂν ἐχρήσατο
- *uolueris*	ἠθελήκοις ἄρα
- *non possim*	οὐκ ἂν δυναίμην
- *conscripserit*	συνέγραψεν ἄρα ἢ συγγεγράφοι ἄρα

For this part of the *De constructione* Priscian diverged from Apollonius' text and resorted to other types of teaching tools with which ancient learners were familiar. Many bilingual texts circulated for Latin learners in the East, like the so-called *colloquia* (Dickey 2012-15), glossaries and translations of miscellaneous texts;[276]

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[272] *GL* 3, 257.12-15. The verse quoted is TER. *And.* 1, 49-50.
[273] *GL* 3, 251.15.
[274] *GL* 3, 258.1-264.15. Priscian's practice of giving the Greek translation of a Latin clause that is part of a quotation is common throughout the *Ars*; see for example *GL* 3, 177.26-178.1: *Terentius in Adephis:* "uideo amare inter se" (*Ad.* 827-28), *id est* φιλεῖν ἀλλήλους.
[275] This is for example CIC. *Verr.* 2.1, 154; the portions of text quoted by Priscian are in bold, and if Priscian's text differ from Cicero's one, it is noted in brackets: «**quaerimus** etiam quid iste in ultima Phrygia, **quid in extremis Pamphyliae partibus fecerit, qualis in bello praedonum praedo ipse fuerit qui in foro populi Romani pirata nefarius reperiatur?** dubitamus **quid iste in hostium praeda molitus sit, qui manubias sibi tantas ex L. Metelli manubiis fecerit, qui maiore pecunia quattuor columnas dealbandas quam ille omnis aedificandas (locarit)** locauerit? exspectemus quid dicant ex Sicilia testes? quis umquam templum illud adspexit quin auaritiae tuae, quin iniuriae, quin audaciae testis esset? **quis a signo (Vertumni)** Vortumni **in circum Maximum uenit quin (is)** in unoquoque gradu de auaritia tua commoneretur? quam tu uiam tensarum atque pompae eiusmodi exegisti ut** [tu] **ipse illa ire non audeas.** te putet quisquam, cum ab Italia freto diiunctus esses, sociis temperasse, **qui aedem Castoris testem tuorum furtorum esse uolueris? quam populus Romanus cotidie, iudices etiam tum cum de te (sententias ferrent uiderent)** sententiam ferent, uidebunt» (ed. by KLOTZ 1923, Teubner).
[276] See DICKEY (2010, 2012-2015, 2015b, 2016).

Latin literary texts by authors such as Vergil, Terence and Cicero were often studied and translated as an exercise by Greek speakers who wanted to learn Latin.[277] The section of the *De constructione* that presents various passages taken from Cicero's *Second Speech Against Verres* is indeed the longest reuse of an ancient author by Priscian, and proceeds from the ancient bilingual teaching tradition.

Priscian must have used this kind of material to compile large parts of the eighteenth book of his *Ars*. This is also evidenced by another section of the text in which Priscian turned to Greek literature, and notably to Plato's *First Alcibiades*,[278] and gave examples of verbal clauses to compare with Latin use. In this case Priscian translates extensively the Greek passages by turning into Latin not only the verbal clause but also the entire expression under examination, unlike what he did with the aforementioned Ciceronian uses. There, Priscian's class needed the translation in Greek only of what might be more difficult to them while reading a piece of Latin literature, namely verbs; here instead, since Greek was their first language, they needed examples of Latin prose composition. I shall give some examples of Priscian's translations from Plato's *First Alcibiades*:

> - PL. *Alc*. 1, 104 B: πρὸς πατρός τέ σοι φίλους καὶ συγγενεῖς πλείστους εἶναι καὶ ἀρίστους, οἵ, εἴ τι δέοι, ὑπηρετοῖεν ἄν σοι.[279]
> PRISC. : *ex patre tibi amicos et cognatos plurimos esse et optimos, qui, si quid opus sit, ministrent tibi.*
>
> - PL. *Alc*. 1, 104 E: ὅρα δή· οὐ γάρ τοι εἴη ἂν θαυμαστόν, εἰ, ὥσπερ μόγις ἠρξάμην, οὕτως καὶ μόγις παυσαίμην.[280]
> PRISC.: *uide autem; non enim sit mirum, si, quomodo uix coepi, sic uix desiero.*
>
> - PL. *Alc*. 1, 105 E: νῦν δὲ ἐφῆκε; νῦν γὰρ ἄν μου ἀκούσαις.[281]
> PRISC.: *nunc, inquit, nunc enim me audias.*[282]

With this kind of literal rendering Priscian did not aim to achieve artistic translations; they were meant to be used to facilitate students' understanding of the points of contact and difference between Greek and Latin. It is clear that Priscian in

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[277] For all these kinds of bilingual material an important piece of evidence is represented by papyri which transmit to us traces of the ancient school practice; for an example of papyrus and further bibliography, see DICKEY (2010).

[278] See *GL* 3, 264.20-266.1.

[279] "[You think that] you have through your father very many of the best people as your friends and kinsmen, who would assist you in case of need" (transl. by LAMB 1964, Loeb).

[280] "Look to it, then; for it would be no wonder if I should make as much difficulty about stopping as I have made about starting" (transl. by LAMB).

[281] "Now he [*scil.* the god] has set me on; for now you will listen to me" (transl. by LAMB).

[282] From Priscian's rendering of ἐφῆκε with *inquit* we might presume that Priscian while dictating/translating read ἔφη (from φημί) in place of ἐφῆκε (from ἐφίημι).

these parts of the *De constructione* adapted and inserted bilingual teaching material for Greek speakers of the sort that is revealed to us by a number of literary papyri from Egypt.[283] In her numerous studies on ancient teaching practice Dickey (2010, 2012-2015, 2015a, 2015b, 2016) has focused on understanding how Latin was taught in the East under the Roman domination, has listed and described different kinds of teaching material, and has recreated the school environment of the time by reviving the school experience of a learner of Latin in his various steps of learning.

Dickey (2015b) shows that it is not always straightforward to see how a bilingual text, as it has been transmitted to us, was produced, and used. In some respects, students' engagement with Latin learning was not much different from today's Latin classrooms; nevertheless "there is no evidence for the translation of individual sentences (either into Latin or out of Latin) as a learning technique" and "no evidence for provision of the kind of student commentary that provides clues to the grammar or syntax of a difficult sentence without translating it" (Dickey 2015b, pp. 50-51).

Although from the data in our possession Dickey's observations appear to be true, this teaching material may receive a new perspective if we consider the use that a teacher could make of it; we should remember that a grammar book, like the *De constructione*, conveys acts of communication between teacher and students, and records the contents of a typical class. The aforementioned passages from the *De constructione* concerning Cicero's and Plato's verbal usages represent samples of Priscian's work with his students.

Bilingual glossaries and literary texts supported the teacher's activity. The teacher used this type of material to construct sentences; to show similarities and differences between Greek and Latin he could give his own translations and explain the grammar and syntax of the passages he was reading with the class. The *De constructione* gives evidence of an actual lesson, comprises other grammatical sources, and thus provides clues to the interpretation, translation, and grammar of a sentence. What we can only assume by studying the features of the different teaching-learning tools transmitted to us, finds confirmation from an analysis of the picture that a grammar book of the sort of the *De constructione* conveys, namely the report of a class studying Latin.

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[283] It is understood that by isolating the quotations and the clauses translated by Priscian we might recover and imagine the columnar layout of Priscian's teaching sources, for which see DICKEY (2015a).

The teacher himself provided student commentary and a key for correct translation and composition. From the reading of Priscian's observations about literary quotations it is understood that his audience must have been acquainted with these texts; students were probably equipped with those texts too and took notes of Priscian's teachings. I shall give an example of Priscian's lesson:

Virgilius in IV Aeneidis:

Si mihi non animo fixum immotumque sederet,
ne cui me uinclo uellem sociare iugali,
postquam primus amor deceptam morte fefellit,
si non pertaesum thalami taedaeque **fuisset***,*
huic uni forsan potui succumbere culpae;[284]

"fuisset" ἐγεγόνει ἄρα. Et notandum, quod et "forsan" dubitationis aduerbium et "potui" possibilitatis uerbum cum infinito posuit, pro quibus sufficeret, si subiunctiuum posuisset "huic uni succubuissem culpae". Docuit igitur poeta, quae sit uis subiunctiui possibilitatem significantis.[285]

Thus Vergil in the fourth book of the *Aeneid*:

"Had I not set my face against remarriage
After my first love died and failed me, left me
Barren and bereaved – and sick to death
At the mere thought of torch and bridal bed –
I could perhaps give way in this one case
To frailty." (transl. by Fitzgerald 1984)

"fuisset" corresponds to the Greek ἐγεγόνει ἄρα. It should also be noted that Vergil used the adverb "forsan" expressing doubt and the verb "potui" expressing possibility together with the infinitive "succumbere", in place of which he could have used the subjunctive: "huic uni succubuissem culpae". Therefore, the poet has taught us the force of the subjunctive expressing possibility.

The quotation from Vergil above shows a contrary to fact conditional sentence with two protases (if-clauses) containing subjunctives (*si...sederet*; *si...fuisset*) and the apodosis (then-clause) being constructed with a perfect indicative (*potui succumbere*).[286] The quotation, which in the first place served Priscian to highlight the use of the subjunctive *fuisset*,[287] enabled him to continue his lesson; he gives his

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[284] VERG. *A.* 4, 15-19.
[285] *GL* 3, 248.10-19.
[286] It is understood that a perfect indicative may be correctly used in place of a pluperfect subjunctive in the apodosis of a condition contrary to fact.
[287] Priscian argues that *fuisset* in the example has a confirmative force (*approbationem significat*). A subjunctive could express three forces/ functions: doubt, confirmation, and possibility (for which see

students a demonstration of an alternative use of Latin syntax and provides them with a new clause; in fact, the Greek constructs the apodosis of a condition contrary to fact with the secondary tenses of the indicative mood (not subjunctive or optative), and therefore it could be useful to Greek students to become accustomed to the normative use of subjunctive in contrary-to-fact conditional sentences. The reading of this passage reveals the teacher's practice of translating and commenting on literary texts together with his class.

A further and final indication that Priscian's closest audience (or at least part of it) consisted of Greek speakers comes from a comparative use of the metalanguage. Quite often Priscian feels it necessary to add Greek glosses to Latin grammatical terms, such as: *per inductionem, id est* καθ᾽ ὑπόθεσιν,[288] *per praesumptionem, id est* κατὰ πρόληψιν,[289] *per figuram conuersionis, id est* κατ᾽ ἀποστροφήν,[290] *per obtinentiam, id est* κατὰ ἐπικράτειαν,[291] and so on. This need to pair Greek and Latin metalanguage may be due on the one hand to the fact that the Latin terms may not have had an autonomous and established use in Latin, and on the other to the fact that the audience may have been more accustomed to the Greek terms: this is interestingly also the case for the term that denotes the subject itself of Priscian's work, namely the *ordinatio siue constructio dictionum, quam Graeci* σύνταξιν *uocant*.[292]

A look at the use of these terms in the previous Latin tradition shows that they were mostly employed in rhetorical works, and that they were usually glossed with the equivalent Greek terms as if the Latin term could not stand alone; Priscian's use did not, however, always match the terms used in the previous tradition.[293] Anyway, this is evidence of the seamless curriculum of ancient education from the teaching of

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GL 3, 247.24-27). The translation in Greek of *fuisset* given by Priscian is ἐγεγόνει ἄρα which is a pluperfect indicative followed by the particle ἄρα; for an interpretation of this usage, see CONDUCHÉ (2016).

[288] *GL* 3, 245.23.

[289] *GL* 3, 125.15.

[290] *GL* 3, 143.23.

[291] *GL* 3, 274.13.

[292] *GL* 3, 108.1-2.

[293] Priscian for example renders καθ᾽ ὑπόθεσιν with *inductio*, while Quintilian referred to Cicero and said: *quod* ἐπαγωγήν *Graeci uocant, Cicero inductionem* (QVINT. *Inst.* 5, 10.73; cf. CIC. *Inu.* 1.51). But *praesumptio* ("anticipation") for πρόληψις is given also by Quintilian (Inst. 9, 2.16) and by Donatus (GL 4, 397.12); Cicero instead rendered πρόληψις with *assumptio* (see CIC. *Diu.* 2.108). We find ἀποστροφή being glossed as: *est in aliquem districta conuersio* in Martianus Capella (5, 523), which resembles Priscian's use. It seems that Priscian calqued himself the term *obtinentia* on the Greek ἐπικράτεια which he found in Apollonius' treatise; it was not a rhetorical term but labelled the class of verbs including *habeo*, *possideo*, *teneo*, ἔχω, κρατῶ and so on, therefore it referred to a semantic division of verbs (cf. *GL* 3, 274.13 ff. and *GG* 2.2/3, 407.3 ff.).

grammar to the training for the future orator; while rhetorical training fell under the responsibility of a *rhetor*, preliminary exercises were also taught by the *grammaticus*.[294] In some respects the *De constructione* represents a synthesis of ancient literary education for advanced students, which will be also clear from the analysis of Priscian's quotations in the next chapter. It should be also noted that Priscian's habit of adding to Latin a Greek gloss was not confined to proper grammatical terms only but also, as above, to linguistic constructions used as examples for students, such as: "ego sum, qui amor", *id est* ὁ φιλούμενος, *uel* "tu es, qui amasti", *id est* ὁ φιλήσας,[295] or: *ut* "mei causa facio", ἐμαυτοῦ χάριν ποιῶ, *et* "nostri causa facimus", ἡμῶν (ἀντὶ τοῦ ἑαυτῶν) χάριν ποιοῦμεν.[296]

In section 3.3 I said that the text of the *De constructione* shows traces of a broader audience which seems to have been addressed by Priscian. This extensive audience is linguistically realised by expressions of the type *Graeci dicunt... nos uero*, *illi... nos uero* which employ pronouns to create a distinction between two groups: *illi*, the Greeks and *nos*, the Romans. Alternative expressions may be with both the clauses in the third person, such as *Graeci quidem... Latini uero*, *frequenter illi... frequenter et Romani*, *Attici dicunt... sic etiam Romani*, but it should be noted that Priscian never uses expressions of the type *uos dicitis... Romani uero*.

These expressions demarcate two different linguistic groups; they are used to compare Greek and Latin syntactic structures which can be similar or not to each other. By using the personal pronoun *nos*, Priscian sees himself from inside the Latin linguistic group, but does not address his ideal class as Greek, although we have established that he taught Latin to Greek speakers mostly. Nevertheless, the *nos dicimus* clause does not refer to a defined audience, to a particular speech community circumscribed in time and space; most of the time it is followed by examples of syntax drawn from Latin authors or by examples made up by Priscian.

With the *nos dicimus* clause Priscian introduces the correct mode of speaking/ writing Latin; he presents examples that are the linguistic data on the basis of which he arranges the description of Latin. Thus, *nos dicimus* does not refer to the spoken language of Priscian's day; it rather expresses both the literary usage and the norm

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[294] For a survey of and readings on Greek and Roman education, see BONNER (1977); JOYAL, MCDOUGALL & YARDLEY (2009); BLOOMER (ed.) (2015).
[295] *GL* 3, 154.5-6.
[296] *GL* 3, 181.3-5.

identified by the teaching tradition. The pronoun *nos* ultimately does not identify an ethnic group, but the idea of belonging to an elite that recognised itself in a language that classical authors used properly.

Nos is opposed to *illi*, the Greeks, who in turn cannot be identified with a specific audience present in Priscian's time, but reflect Greek cultural identity. "Roman" and "Greek" are used by Priscian as cultural terms with reference to the Roman and Greek respective pasts and traditions, each being communicated by recognised and established languages. In a narrower sense, if Priscian with *nos* and *illi* refers to the Latin and Greek literary traditions which embodied a set of shared values and models, then he ultimately considers himself among the Roman writers. He placed himself alongside Cicero or Vergil because he could reproduce and imitate their language. He did not refer to the linguistic situation of his own time, but in opposing *Graeci* and *Latini* Priscian reveals the understanding and perception that elites had of themselves at the time he wrote.

Other sixth century authors such as John Lydus employed the terms "Roman" and "Greek" in different ways. Dmitriev (2010) approaches the problem of the double identity of the Byzantines in the sixth century and analyses the use of the terms "Roman" and "Greek" by contemporary writers. While he sees a contrast between "Roman" and "Greek" when they are used in cultural terms, with the eastern empire falling into the second category, he records that in political terms the Byzantines considered themselves "Romans" since the eastern empire was politically a continuation of the Roman state, and that therefore "being Roman and being Greek pertained to different aspects of one's existence" (p. 40). Priscian's use of *Graeci* and *Latini* reflected indeed the traditional cultural divide based on language between the Greeks and Romans, but we know that in the sixth century other factors influenced the perception that members of a community had, like faith (cf. Greatrex 2000).

As I mentioned earlier (p. 112), this "they say/ we say" narrative, which runs throughout Priscian's text, originated in the East. The *De constructione* is a fortunate field of enquiry into the ancient practice of comparing Greek and Latin syntactic usages, mostly drawn from literary authors. The final part of the *De constructione*, the so-called Atticistic lexicon, was indeed designed to collect these usages, as a completion of the syntactic analyses presented throughout the two books. In the next section I am going firstly to consider the previous grammatical tradition in order to

find prior cases of this narrative and teaching practice, and secondly to interpret the evidence in the light of the cultural and linguistic background of Priscian's audience.

3.5 The *idiomata* in the eastern teaching practice

If we look at the previous grammatical tradition to find a prior case of the "they say/ we say" narrative, we come across those parts of Latin *Artes* that dealt with *idiomata*, namely, in the words of Charisius,[297] with "all those expressions uttered according to the rules of our own language, not according to Greek" (*omnia quae pro nostro more efferimus et non secundum Graecos*).[298]

These sections of *idiomata* within Latin *Artes* are very important in the development of Latin studies on syntax and reflect a specific eastern teaching concern. After a recognition of the use of *idiomata* in schools, and an analysis of their pedagogical function, it will be possible to reflect further on the ancient linguistic theory that linked Greek and Latin grammar and underlay the teaching of Latin in the East.

The term *idiomata* itself is a Greek loanword and Roman grammarians used it as a technical term referring to those constructions that were, or were felt to be proper to Latin aside from those Latin structures that were seen instead as being influenced in some ways by Greek. Why was there a need for this definition of Latin syntactic uses? The answer has to be found in the development of teaching tools aiming at teaching Latin to Greek speakers in a situation of intense language contact.

The process of Hellenisation of the Latin language through commercial, political, cultural, literary, and linguistic contact between Greeks and Romans has been a subject of study and research in the last decades. Adams (2003) covers a wide range of aspects concerning language contact and Graeco-Roman bilingualism,[299] warning that the Graecising of Latin was not a homogeneous process, social class being a factor to take into account.

The attitude of Roman writers towards foreign elements interfering in Latin varied over time. Foreign linguistic elements had not always been accepted by members of the elite, who sometimes talked in terms of corruption of the language,

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[297] Charisius lived and worked in mid-fourth century CE and was author of an *Ars grammatica* in five books. For an overview see KASTER (1988, n. 200) and ZETZEL (2018, n. 13).
[298] *GL* 1, 291.3.
[299] See also BIVILLE (2002).

with examples spanning from the classical period to late antiquity (cf. Biville 2002, p. 95-98). Notably, the interference of Greek on Latin, real or alleged, was seen as permeating all of the dimensions of grammar: phonology, morphology, lexicon, and syntax. Claims within grammatical treatises of a Greek fashion (*Graecus mos*) influencing Latin linguistic structures have to do with the perception that grammarians had of the language they taught and of the linguistic relationship between Greek and Latin. It is this *Graecus mos* that we have to understand in reading the definitions of *idiomata* given by grammarians. How was it that Latin grammarians used a Greek word to express what in fact was peculiar to Latin?

The Latin translation of ἰδίωμα is *proprietas*, which is a term that grammarians used to refer to morphological or semantic features specific to parts of speech, but was not so widespread as *qualitas* for example, or the more general *accidentia*. The grammarian who used the term *proprietas* the most was Priscian; often he translated it from his source, Apollonius Dyscolus, where ἰδίωμα is used with its proper meaning of a specific morphological or syntactic property of language.

In Greek ἰδίωμα clearly did not have the technical meaning that *idioma* had instead in Latin; it was used nevertheless to refer to the peculiarities of style and language of a specific author: for example, the treatise Περὶ τῶν τοῦ Θουκυδίδου ἰδιωμάτων πρὸς Ἀμμαῖον by Dionysius of Halicarnassus may be regarded as the attempt to collect the peculiarities of Thucydides' style which distinguished him from other writers before him.[300] This second instance of ἰδίωμα may have helped the Romans to model the technical term *idioma*.[301]

The definition of *idiomata* given by Charisius is contained in the fifth and last book of his *Ars grammatica*, devoted to listing uses of verbs peculiar to Latin,[302] and is formed of two parts. First, he defined *idiomata* as "all those expressions uttered according to the rules of our own language, not according to Greek, which are indeed

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[300] Dionysius wrote this treatise to Ammaeus as a supplement to the Περὶ Θουκυδίδου, a rhetorical study on Thucydides.

[301] The cognate term ἰδιωτισμός and its calque *idiotismus*, on the other hand, referred to a familiar and colloquial phrase which had to be avoided, although it did not imply incorrectness (cf. FERRI & PROBERT 2010, pp. 28-39).

[302] One example given by Charisius is the verb *parco* "to spare, forbear" which takes in Latin a dative. He does not mention the Greek counterpart but says that in Greek you need a genitive in place of the dative. We may suppose that Charisius referred to φείδομαι.

countless";[303] second, Charisius reported a definition attributed to unspecified others which places earlier literary usages and Graecised Latin on the same footing: "although it seems that the Latin language is dependent upon Greek, we find some features of it that are used not according to the Greek usage but either to the freedom of writing of ancient authors or to the peculiar nature of Latin".[304] We can see that for Charisius a *Graecus mos* constituted a criterion of description of language alongside the *licentia* of ancient writers (namely their *usus*) and the *proprietas linguae* (which is to say the *ratio*).

Charisius was followed a few decades later by another Latin grammarian, Diomedes,[305] who seems to have drawn from Charisius' work (Kaster 1988, p. 271), and adopted the same words to define "*idiomata*"; the autonomy of Latin uses from Greek was explained with the recourse either to the authority of ancient writers or to rules that were peculiar to Latin.[306]

A look at Diomedes' examples of *idiomata* helps us understand the linguistic background affecting the composition of his *Ars*. Indeed, by reading the section dedicated to case government, the presence of the Greek language as a means and a model of analysis is manifest. The ablative case, for example, has many functions, Diomedes explains, and very often is used in the place of a Greek genitive or dative; examples are: *libero puerperam dolore*; *dono magistratum statua*; *regno in urbe*.[307] Moreover, where Latin uses an ablative with the preposition *in* (**in monte Caucaso poenas luit Prometheus**), Greek requires a dative instead: ἐν τῷ Καυκασίῳ ὄρει. Diomedes thinks also of the correspondence between ablative and genitive absolute (e.g. *incusante Cicerone, Catilina conuictus est* / κατηγοροῦντος Κικέρωνος ἐλέγχθη Κατιλίνας).[308] These are all Latin *idiomata*, because they do not follow the Greek.

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[303] *Idiomata quae sunt nostri sermonis innumerabilia quidem debent esse. Ea enim sunt omnia quae pro nostro more efferimus et non secundum Graecos* (*GL* 1, 291.2-4). An example is the gender of the noun *honor*, which is masculine in Latin and feminine in Greek: ἡ τιμή.

[304] *Aliis etiam ita de idiomatibus placuit definire. Cum ab omni sermone Graeco Latina lingua pendere uideatur, quaedam inueniuntur uel licentia ab antiquis uel proprietate linguae Latinae dicta praeter consuetudinem Graecorum* (*GL* 1, 292.16-19). A case of Latin idiom due to the freedom of ancient authors is the use of *utor* with an accusative instead of the usual ablative (*GL* 1, 292.24-25: utor hac re nos dicimus, apud ueteres autem et utor hanc rem *dictum est*).

[305] See KASTER (1988, n. 47), and ZETZEL (2018, n. 18).

[306] See *GL* 1, 311.3-6: *cum ab omni sermone Graeco Latina loquella pendere uideatur, quaedam inueniuntur uel licentia ab antiquis uel proprietate Latinae linguae dicta praeter consuetudinem Graecorum, quae idiomata appellantur*.

[307] Diomedes probably refers to: λύω ἐκ/ ἀπό + gen., ἄρχω + gen., but δίδωμι has the construction τινί τι.

[308] Cf. *GL* 1, 315.19-318.22.

There is a further stage in Diomedes' presentation of the topic: the force of Greek constructions seems to influence Latin *idiomata* to a point where Latin speakers cannot help but adapt their way of expression. It is owing to the influence of a Greek fashion that contemporary speakers of Latin have started to use the dative where the *ueteres* used instead an accusative.[309] What it is interesting is the fact that Diomedes seems to link the current language to a Greek influence.

I shall list here below and comment on some of the clauses that according to Diomedes were affected by Greek usage. In reading Diomedes' *idiomata*, I use as a reference tool an anonymous collection of *idiomata* which are published in the *Grammatici Latini* corpus.[310] This collection consists of two parts: the first is about case government, the second about gender of nouns, with instances where Latin and Greek differ from each other. It is interesting to note that such lists of *idiomata* present the Greek usage alongside every Latin entry; many times though, in the section devoted to case government, the assumption that an *idioma* is a usage peculiar to Latin is not strictly observed, because there are instances in which, for a given verb, Latin and Greek require the same case, as for example *succurro tibi* / βοηθῶ σοι, *insidior tibi* / ἐπιβουλεύω σοι, *offendo amicum* / βλάπτω τὸν φίλον. How is that? The anonymous author of the list was probably not concerned with justifying the similarities between Latin and Greek syntax; the list was only a collection of usages, although it retained the technical term *idiomata*.

Diomedes instead in his *Ars* shows that the linguistic data contained in lists such as this anonymous collection underwent an ideological interpretation to which the linguistic attitude and beliefs of the grammarian must have contributed. All of the Latin verbs given as examples by Diomedes are compound verbs;[311] he does not mention the Greek usage that underlies the new Latin fashion, and which he had in mind when compiling such a list, but I shall suggest a possible lexical counterpart for them with the help of the anonymous collection *Idiomata casuum*; Diomedes might have used for his purpose a similar bilingual list of *idiomata*.

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[309] Cf. *GL* 1, 320.1-9.
[310] *GL* 4, 566.1-584.32.
[311] The list of verbs analysed below is found at *GL* 1, 320.1-9.

Veteres	*Nos secundum Graecos*

1- *obiurgo filium* ("I rebuke my son)   *obiurgo filio*

This entry is found also in the *Idiomata casuum* collection, where the Greek counterpart is also given. There the entry is actually doubled, since it appears under both the datives list and the accusatives list: *obiurgo tibi*: ἐπιπλήττω σοι and ἐπιστρέφω σε; *obiurgo te*: ἐπιπλήττω σοι. Evidence from Latin authors shows that *obiurgo* was actually used with the accusative: *Chrysalus me obiurgauit plurimis uerbis malis* (Plaut. *Bacch.* 1020); *obiurgauit M. Caelium* (Cic. *Cael.* 11, 25) and *in quo te obiurgem* (Cic. *Fam.* 3, 8, 9). Uses of *obiurgo* with the dative are attested only by Diomedes and by the *Acta conciliorum*, where they are calqued on λοιδορέω (see *ThLL, s.v.*).

2- *excanto te* ("I charm you out")   *excanto tibi*

The *Idiomata casuum* lists: *incanto tibi et excanto te* ἐπᾴδω σοι (*GL* 4, 571.26). There is no evidence of *excanto* with the dative; there is a sole instance of *incanto* with the dative in Apuleius (*Met.* 8, 20), where it is used with the wider sense of "to sing".

3- *inpendeo te* ("I threaten you")   *impendeo tibi*

There is no entry for this verb in the *Idiomata casuum*. I suppose that Greek would use verbs like ἐπίκειμαι or ἐπικρεμάννυμι, both governing a dative. *Impendeo* is found with both the dative and the accusative (also with the preposition *in*). The label of "current use" of *impendeo* with the dative might be affected also by the synonyms *immineo* and *insto*, both governing a dative.

4- *adtendo legentem* ("I give heed to the   *adtendo legenti*
        reader")

The *Idiomata casuum* has: *adtendo te oculis* βλέπω σε ὀφθαλμοῖς, *adtendo tibi mente* ὁρῶ σε διανοίᾳ (*GL* 4, 568.33-34) and *adtendo declamanti et declamantem* προσέχω τὸν δημηγόρον (*GL* 4, 571.12-13). Diomedes had already listed the entry at 314.25 in the same way as the *Idiomata casuum*: *adtendo te oculis, adtendo tibi mente*. Other Greek verbs with this meaning are ἐπιτείνω τινι or ἐπιβάλλω τινι. The constructions of *attendo*, προσέχω and ἐπιβάλλω with the dative assume the understanding of *animum*/ τὸν νοῦν. *Attendo* and the accusative is found only with inanimate objects.

5- *aduerto te* ("I give attention to you")   *aduerto tibi*

Aduerto is used literally with inanimate objects in the accusative followed by either a dative or *in/ad* and accusative (cf. ἐπιστρέφω and προσπελάζω): *pedem aduertere ripae* (Verg. *Aen.* 6, 386); *in portum classem aduertit* (Liv. 37, 9.7). It is used figuratively as a synonym of the previous entry *attendo* according to the construction: *animum aduertere aliquid/ ad aliquid/ alicui rei/ in aliquem*; hence the compound *animaduerto*. *Aduerto* taking a person as an object has the meaning of "to see", "to know", sometimes with the addition of *oculis/animo* and therefore comparable to the previous entry: *adtendo te oculis* βλέπω σε ὀφθαλμοῖς. The *Idiomata casuum* has: *animaduerto te* κολάζω σε καὶ προσέχω σε (*GL* 4, 569.3). Priscian also lists the idiom *animum aduerto* in the Atticisms section at the end of the eighteenth book as equivalent to the Greek: προσέχετε τὸν νοῦν τούτῳ/ πρὸς τοῦτον (*GL* 3, 357.3).

6- *adsido socium* ("I am at my ally's side")   *adsido socio*

It seems to me that Diomedes actually referred to the uses of *adsideo*, which he had previously listed as: *adsideo te et tibi* (*GL* 1, 314.25). *Adsido* is a synonym, mostly used with clauses of place. The *Idiomata casuum* has: *adsideo praetori et praetorem* παραιδρύω τῷ ἄρχοντι (*GL* 4, 571.12); another Greek verb is προσεδρεύω τινί which can also mean "to besiege" as *adsideo*. Also Priscian records the use of *adsideo* with the dative drawn from Juvenal, associated with προσκαθέζομαι ("to sit before", "to besiege") and the accusative found in Thucydides (*GL* 3, 356.17-20); Spangenberg Yanes (2017, p. 427) notes that a *scholion* on Thucydides claims that the koine preferred the use of προσκαθέζομαι with the dative instead of the accusative.

7- *inludo hominem* ("I mock the man")   *inludo homini*

> The *Idiomata casuum* records: *inludo stolidum et stolido* καταπαίζω τοῦ μωροῦ (*GL* 4, 568.17), and: *inludo uanum et uano* ἐμπαίζω τῷ ματαίῳ (*GL* 4, 571.17). In Latin the uses of *inludo* include dative, accusative, *in* plus ablative and *in* plus accusative as recorded also by Arusianus Messius in his *Exempla elocutionum* (*GL* 7, 479.20-480.2). The Greek uses the verbs ἐγγελάω with the dative or εἴς τινα, and ἐμπαίζω with the dative, which is found often in the Gospels (see *ThLG*, *s.v.*). Priscian records *inludere* with the dative (together with *adludere ad aliquid*; *irrideo* and the accusative; *arrideo* and the dative) paired with the Greek entry προσπαίζω with the accusative (*GL* 3, 351.5-12).

8- *praestolor nutricem* ("I wait for the   *praestolor nutrici*

   nurse")

> Both uses are attested. The *Idiomata casuum* records: *praestolor nutrici et nutricem* σέβω τὴν τροφόν, σέβω τὴν τίτθην; here though σέβω ("I respect") seems not to correspond in meaning with *praestolor*. I understand from Priscian (cf. *GL* 3, 272.26-274.13) that while *praestolor te* means "I wait for you", *praestolor tibi* assumes also the idea of service or advantage/disadvantage to the person involved, as it is expected however by a dative; in this second use *praestolor* shares the idea of reverence with σέβω.

These are the idioms that Diomedes related to a Greek influence. The teaching practice of Antiquity produced lists of syntactic uses for Greek and Latin which at some point in the hands of some teachers became bilingual in order to meet pupils' needs, by means of the same sort of adaptation that Dickey (2010) has observed for the Latin-Greek glossary preserved on *P.Sorb.* inv. 2069.[312]

The bilingual glossary contained in the papyrus studied by Dickey shows traces of its three-stages transmission history: it was first assembled as a glossary of homonyms within the Latin tradition around the second century CE, became afterwards a bilingual tool for Latin speakers learning Greek, and eventually adapted as a tool for Greek speakers learning Latin (Dickey 2010, p. 188).

Lists of compared Latin and Greek uses were made on the basis of literary usages and often quotations were added as examples; excerpting from literary works was presumably the first stage of composing a list of idioms. Such lists could thereafter

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[312] A new edition of the text may be found in DICKEY & FERRI (2010).

be incorporated in more comprehensive grammatical treatises, as was the case for Charisius', Diomedes' and Priscian's *Artes*.

Having said that eastern grammarians produced lists of Latin usage based on literary authors, it is important to note that this practice was not confined to the East. It is understood that also in the West students studied grammar and rhetoric on literary models, and that apt teaching tools were produced for this purpose. We can mention the work of the rhetorician Arusianus Messius, who lived and taught in Rome at the end of the fourth century.[313] He composed the *Exempla elocutionum*, a handbook of usage, an alphabetical list of idiomatic expressions drawn from Vergil, Terence, Cicero and Sallust. Together these four authors were known as *quadriga Messii*, "the four-horse chariot of Arusianus Messius", which is to say that they formed a quartet which Arusianus set as models of linguistic style.[314] Notably, Arusianus' work shared the same intent of the treatise Περὶ τῶν τοῦ Θουκυδίδου ἰδιωμάτων by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, which we mentioned above (p. 131). What was different between western and eastern works was the fact that in the East Greek was used to explain Latin.

The discussion above leads us now to consider in further depth the Atticisms section in the *De constructione*. Priscian's glossary is a more comprehensive work than the minimal lists contained in Charisius' and Diomedes' works; it covers indeed one hundred pages in the edition of the *Grammatici Latini* collection.[315] Priscian's list is technically a collection of *idiomata*; however, he did not use the word *idiomata* to label his list of Latin and Greek uses, but referred to it as a collection of Atticisms.[316]

By looking at the sources used by Priscian in the composition of this final part of the *Ars*, it is clear how teachers employed monolingual material in composing new tools for a bilingual teaching. It has been shown (Valente 2014; Sonnino 2014; Rosellini 2010) that the main source for the Atticisms section was a Greek glossary composed around the second century CE. Priscian worked on a Latin-Greek (Attic) inventory of idioms based on the Greek alphabetic order from the letter alpha to chi,[317] although the result presents a lack of uniformity regarding the drafting and the

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[313] See ZETZEL (2018), *sv.*
[314] Arusianus Messius' book is the *Exempla elocutionum ex Vergilio Sallustio Terentio Cicerone digesta per litteras* (*GL* 7, 449-514).
[315] From *GL* 3, 278.13 to 377.18.
[316] See *GL* 3, 229.17-19.
[317] Letters zeta and rho are also missing.

completeness of entries (see Spangenberg Yanes 2017, pp. xliii-lxxii). It has also been shown (cf. Rosellini 2011) that his list and Arusianus Messius' list probably shared a common Latin source; drawing from it Priscian decided to extend the range of authors to quote, although the traditional four authors Vergil, Terence, Cicero and Sallust are the core of his teaching. Priscian brought together therefore Greek and Latin uses by adapting Greek and Latin independent sources.

From the fact that Priscian avoided referring to this part of his work with a term, *idiomata*, accepted within the Latin tradition which referred to what differentiated Latin from Greek, it follows that his focus was probably more on highlighting the similarities between the two languages; he did not create a list of Latin uses as opposed to the Greek, but wanted to yoke the two tongues together and therefore showed a different approach in relation to the linguistic uses he collected.

The eastern teaching environment, therefore, which aimed at forming the linguistic competences of Greek elite members, produced learning tools which described Latin usages as opposed, or compared, to Greek ones. Lists of these uses were derived from literary examples and sometimes were also enriched with quotations that exemplified the constructions considered, as the Atticistic lexicon shows. The *Graecus mos*, which in the eyes of grammarians seems to have influenced to some extent Latin, was sometimes used to refer to the newest uses of language.

In the next section, while considering the pedagogical utility of *idiomata* as a way to teach case government, I am going to assess to what extent these ancient discussions of *idiomata* reflected new usages as opposed to literary Latin.

3.6 *Idiomata* and *Graecus mos*

It is understood that syntactically each case in Latin and Greek does not have one exclusive function; the same case may denote different functions (the ablative for example may fulfil the instrument, manner or source functions), but also a same function may be expressed in different ways depending on whether the object is animate or inanimate, or is part of a specific noun class such as "names of city". For example, movement towards a place is expressed by a simple accusative if the place is a name of city as *Roma* (*Romam*), is instead expressed by *in* plus accusative if it is a common noun as *ager* (*in agrum*); but *in* plus accusative also denotes a movement against someone if an animate object is used instead, like *hostis* (*in hostes*: "against the enemy"), this being a meaning derived from the original idea of direction.

It is the verb that within a clause requires this or that complement, and also determines the number of complements, which may be more than one depending on the meaning of the verb. Nevertheless, the animate or inanimate nature of nouns is also sometimes responsible for different cases fulfilling a certain function; the instrument is for example expressed by an ablative when it is a thing, but a person is usually denoted by *per* with the accusative, as in the following examples: **dente lupus, cornu** *taurus petit* (Hor., *Sat.* 2, 1.52) and *decima legio* **per tribunos** *militum Caesari gratias egit* (Caes., *Gall.* 1, 41.2); a passive verb may require the ablative with *ab* or not, referring to two different functions of the ablative case: *Caesar interfectus est* ("Caesar was killed"); 1- *a Bruto* ("by Brutus"); 2- *pugione* ("by a dagger").

What emerges from the analysis of *idiomata* in section 3.5, selected from Diomedes, is that there seemed to be confusion around some verbs that accept a construction with different cases. Among the verbs considered, *adsideo* expresses vicinity, care for someone when governing an animate dative, but with either an inanimate dative or accusative it expresses opposition to, attack. By looking at how Priscian organised the entries in the section on *idiomata*, it seems that he had thought of a distinction between animate and inanimate objects, and tried to match the entry with the type of object contained in the literary quotations given as an example (cf. Spangenberg Yanes 2017, pp. lix-lxi).

Both teaching and learning case government must have been a laborious task for teachers and pupils, especially if the latter were Greek speakers learning Latin as Charisius', Diomedes' and Priscian's audiences appear to have been. It might be the same laborious task that non-native English speakers have when learning which prepositions to use after verbs or learning by heart phrasal verbs. The lexical and syntactic properties of Latin, the variety of uses among the authors, and probably the interferences of the spoken language constituted an obstacle to the necessity of describing language by finding patterns and analogies that could make learning easier. It seems that the perception of a Greek influence on some Latin uses was one of the way schools explained this variety of language.

The lists of *idiomata* within the *Artes* of these three grammarians show the wide range of uses which were often in competition with each other (*opto a dis* / *opto dis*; *amicus sum illius* / *amicus sum illi*).[318] For example, while it seems plausible that

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[318] *GL* 1, 319.30; 318.24.

verbs like *obiurgo* and *excanto*, used with a dative, showed the influence of Greek, since they were normally used with an accusative, in other cases the Greek card seems played by grammarians to offer a justification of concurrent uses or because of misinterpretation. Diomedes for example, with inversion of perspective, considered ancient writers as following the Greek way when they wrote *quid tibi futurum est* ("what will become of you"), while the current use preferred the accusative: *quid te futurum est*. In fact, these two expressions were used throughout antiquity without a substantial difference; Cicero says *quid tibi futurum sit* (*Phil*. 2, 34), and *quid de te futurum sit* (*Verr*. 2, 5.164), Seneca uses *quid mihi futurum est* (*Ep*. 12, 1), while Terence says *quid te futurum est* (*Phorm*. 137). It should be noted that the idiom *quid te* is likely to be ablative as Dickey (2012-15) claims for the same expression found in the *Colloquium Harleianum* (14b), where in turn it is paralleled with τί σέ, and therefore interpreted as an accusative. On the other hand, the interpretation of *quid te* as an accusative works if a verb governing an indirect statement is understood.

Moreover, contrary to Diomedes' teaching the *Idiomata casuum* collection attributes the use of *futurum est* with the dative to the newest use (*quid futurum est patri*), while *ueteres dixerunt 'quid patrem futurum est'*: τί ἔσται ὁ πατήρ.[319] This shows that the opposition *ueteres*/ *nos secundum Graecos* used in ancient discussions of case government was open to interpretation, and that the difficulties of learning Latin influenced the way grammarians explained case government.

We can imagine a situation where Latin learners, and even Latin speakers studying Latin, juggled between linguistic choices, between variants and mistakes, between accepted forms and wrong arrangements. It should be also remembered that the language at issue in these ancient *Artes* was the high variety of Latin, whose learning lacked to some extent the possibility of consolidation through everyday usage. Mistakes in case government in both speaking and writing were just waiting to happen; unlike what might have happened with everyday common speech, there must have been among elites a social pressure for linguistic correctness in using the standard Latin on which their elite social status depended.

The perception that *idiomata* were examples of the standard language, and became over time practical applications of grammatical rules that differed from everyday use is evidenced also by a passage from Cassiodorus, who labelled the work

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[319] *GL* 4, 571.14-16.

of Arusianus Messius as a collection of the rules of Latin (*regulas elocutionum Latinorum*)[320] in his *Institutiones diuinarum litterarum* (which was written for the monks of the monastic community of Vivarium founded and led by him until his death in *c*. 590 CE). In the same chapter Cassiodorus referred to *idiomata* as "peculiar turns of phrase that do not occur in common usage";[321] although he actually referred to idioms of the Divine Scripture, which sometimes differed from the rules of standard Latin,[322] he used *idiomata* as a technical term as established by school practice and opposed to *communis usus*.

There is something else to add to the interpretation of the passages just discussed above; the resort to a *Graecus mos* must be also considered in relation to the Greek background of the students of these grammarians. At a practical level, drawing attention to similarities in case government between Latin and Greek was useful to Greek students to learn the Latin more quickly. If we consider the ancient columnar layout of teaching tools like *colloquia*, glossaries and lists of *idiomata* (cf. Dickey 2015a), expressions like *secundum Graecos* or *Graeco more*, which we find in the *Artes*, may be interpreted as textual marks of the passage of those mere bilingual lists into a more comprehensive grammatical work. They substitute for the columnar layout which has been included by the grammarian in his argumentation.

To sum up this discussion of *idiomata*, when Latin teachers had to find ways to teach Latin in the East, they produced learning tools which compared the native language of their students with the target language. This teaching need led to analyses and descriptions of Latin on the basis of the language of the learners, Greek; such a practice would have helped their understanding and studying. While the focus of these lists was particularly on case government, the Latin described, based on literary usages, could be challenging for both teachers and students. The influence of a Greek fashion could explain different uses.

In interpreting the resort in ancient *artes* to this Greek fashion to explain Latin structures, different interconnected perspectives must be therefore considered; beyond objective linguistic similarities between Latin and Greek, one must consider the bilingual teaching environment, and the sociolinguistic influence of Greek perceived by the elites, which helped to explain concurrent uses or linguistic change.

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[320] CASSIOD. *Inst*. *Diu*. *Litt*. 1, 15.7.
[321] See CASSIOD. *Inst*. *Diu*. *Litt*. 1, 15.2.
[322] Odd usages of Latin were created when the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures were translated into Latin.

In the next section I shall focus on the ancient linguistic narrative that paired Greek and Latin together in order to see to what extent Priscian's work reflects this conception.

3.7 *Coniunctissima cognatio*

In the first chapter (section 1.9) the emergence of the theory that Latin had derived from Greek in the most ancient times of Roman history was discussed. While the first representative of this linguistic view was the Greek Hypsicrates of Amisos in the first century BCE, it was Roman thought that eventually adopted it. Ideological aspects influenced the development and spread of this theory, which had to do therefore with the complex cultural relationship between Greece and Rome.

In the Latin grammatical tradition this linguistic theory influenced the way in which Latin was explained, especially from a lexical point of view (cf. De Paolis 2015). It has been shown by Baratin (1989, pp. 343-360), for example, that the ancient practice of excerpting *idiomata* must be seen as a product of Roman reflection on *Latinitas*, and that the definition of *idiomata* as "that which is said not according to the Greek usage but either to the freedom of writing of ancient authors or to the peculiar nature of Latin" should be seen in the light of Latin being considered as a Greek dialect (Baratin 1989, p. 352).

As we have seen in this chapter, Priscian's work is filled with expressions that relate to the relationship between Greek and Latin. Throughout the *Ars*, on the one hand, he acknowledges the differences between Greek and Latin, which is textually marked by the expression *Graeci dicunt... nos uero*, but on the other, the general framework remains that of stressing the common grammatical ground, as we have seen from the way in which in the *De constructione* Priscian transferred his main source into Latin.

With regard to the developments of linguistic theories that saw Greek and Latin as a pair, I will consider now the evidence given by Macrobius in the introduction to a text that has come down to us in the form of excerpts, the *De uerborum Graeci et Latini differentiis uel societatibus* which compared the Greek and Latin verb and was written in the first half of the fifth century.[323] Macrobius was not a grammarian and

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[323] The text was published by Keil in the *Grammatici Latini* collection; a new edition, which I have followed, is DE PAOLIS (1990).

the treatise had no teaching purposes but "tone and form are those of learned inquiry" (Dionisotti 1984, p. 206). Notably, he seems to have resorted to the work of Apollonius Dyscolus on the verb, while Priscian may have made use of Macrobius, too (De Paolis 1990).

What is interesting to the present discussion is that Macrobius built his argument on the idea of sameness between Greek and Latin, rather than dependence as in the theories developed in the republican period, and that they constitute a pair compared to the other languages.

> Cum uel natura uel usus loquendi linguas gentium multiplici diuersitate uariasset, ceteris aut anhelitu aut sibilo explicantibus loqui suum, solis Graecae Latinaeque et soni leporem et artis disciplinam atque in ipsa loquendi mansuetudine similem cultum et coniunctissimam cognationem dedit. Nam et [h]isdem orationis partibus absque articulo, quem Graecia sola sortita est, et [h]isdem penes singulas partes obseruationibus sermo uterque distinguitur, pares fere in utroque componendi figurae, ut propemodum "qui utramuis artem didicerit ambas nouerit". Sed quia ita natura fert, ne quid sic esse alteri possit simile, ut idem illi sit (necesse est enim omne quod simile est aliqua differentia ab eo cui confertur recedat), ideo, cum partes orationis in utraque lingua arta inter se similitudine uincirentur, quasdam tamen proprietates, quibus seorsum insignirentur, habuerunt, quae Graeco nomine idiomata uocantur.[324]

> Since the languages of the peoples had changed in very diverse forms due to the nature of language or to the use of it, while the other tongues received, as their own, the characteristic of speaking by expounding things in heavy breathing and whistling, only the Greek and Latin tongues received a pleasantness of sound and the possibility of shaping utterance according to learned skills; moreover they are characterised by a similar cultivation and a very close link with respect to the softness of speaking itself. Both languages are distinguished by the same parts of speech except for the article, which only the Greek obtained, and by the same sense of correct usage with respect to each of these parts; Greek and Latin have almost the same figures of constructions, so that it is more or less true that "he who has learned either of the two arts knows both (TER. *And*. 10)". But since Nature has it that no one thing can be so similar to any other as to be the same as it (for it is necessary that everything that is similar to something else is at least distinguished in some respects from it), for this reason, although the parts of speech of both languages are linked by a close similarity between them, nevertheless they had some peculiarities by which they were marked separately, which we call with a Greek word *idiomata*.

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[324] MACR. *Exc*. 5.2-7.10.

This passage clearly reveals the status of Latin linguistic theory with respect to the sort of relationship existing between Latin and Greek.[325] It is an erudite presentation which offers elements of different backgrounds; first, there is a strong emphasis on the role that both *natura* and *usus* play in the characterisation of a language and in the process of diversification of tongues.[326] Then, Macrobius' argumentation develops a kind of philosophical explanation of why Greek and Latin must present at least some differences between them, otherwise they would be the same thing. It is also worth noting that Greek and Latin are not distinguished from the other tongues only with respect to their grammars but also to their aesthetical superiority.

Macrobius speaks of a *coniunctissima cognatio* between Greek and Latin which seems clear from the sound and the grammar of the two languages. They both share the same criteria that regulate a correct usage, so that to learn one of the two means almost learning them both. It seems here that the traditional components of *Latinitas* and Ἑλληνισμός merged together in a new linguistic entity. Natural differences between Greek and Latin, which cannot be eliminated, are called *idiomata*.

It is easy to see in these learned views the theories that developed within the school practice of comparing Greek and Latin to the use of students. Macrobius presents a learned enquiry, which found its reception among the Roman elites of fifth century; the same underlying cultural narrative echoed by Macrobius in the preface of the *De differentiis uel societatibus*, can be assumed for Priscian.

This underlying cultural narrative can be understood in the *De constructione* by the fact that Priscian transferred into Latin the Greek conceptual framework of Apollonius' work, its metalanguage, sometimes even its syntax. It is reflected by the constant comparison between Greek and Latin constructions in the attempt to show similarities more than differences. It is clearly enunciated at the beginning of the Atticistic lexicon, where Priscian invites his audience not to be surprised by the transitive use of Latin verbs since the *Attici* observe same constructions.[327] Priscian's project was possible because of these learned views shared by the elites.

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[325] A detailed presentation of Greek and Latin sources which examines the linguistic theory of the derivation of Latin from Greek, and the particular role played by Macrobius within the Latin tradition, is found in DE PAOLIS (2015).

[326] It is worth remembering that together with *ratio* and *auctoritas* they regulated the correct Latin usage; cf. Varro (*GL* 1, 439.15-17).

[327] See *GL* 3, 278.7-9.

In the final section of this chapter, I am going to consider further Priscian's engagement with Greek linguistic theories in order to give examples of Greek and Latin pairing. The degree of interweaving of Greek models of language and Latin linguistic issues can be highlighted by focusing on some lexical choices that Priscian makes throughout his work, and particularly in the *De constructione*. I shall look first at the use of the ethnic adjective *Attici* in the Atticistic lexicon and then at references to other Greek dialects, which will give us a further insight into Priscian's handling of his sources.

3.8 **Examples of Priscian's linguistic views**

In reading Priscian's Atticisms, a lexical feature stands out, namely the frequent use of the ethnic adjective *Attici*, which in the rest of the *Ars* appears only a few times. This word choice is clearly due to the Greek source that Priscian used, namely an Atticistic lexicon of first/ second century CE, so that Priscian kept the distinctive character of his model.[328] Nevertheless, other Greek dialects are mentioned throughout the *Ars* to explain Latin linguistic issues.

If we consider the entire *Ars* there is a great difference between books 1-16 and the *De constructione*: in books 1-16 Priscian mentions mostly Aeolic and then to a lesser extent Doric, Attic (in one case together with Ionic) and only in one case Beotian; while in the *De constructione* besides the numerous cases of Atticisms he mentions only once Thessalian and Macedonian.

The significance to be given to the presence of Greek dialects within Priscian's discussion depends on the type of sources used and on the subject discussed; it is not evidence of a direct knowledge of Greek dialects. It is especially in the first and second books of the *Ars* that Priscian refers to dialectal features to explain Latin phonology; these kinds of explanations found their origin in the traditional view of the Greek (Aeolic) derivation of Latin, and phonology was an area in which similarities and differences between Latin and Greek were easily detected. For example, the Aeolic digamma is referred to by Priscian to describe the approximant /w/ when it functions as a consonant:[329] ὄϜις *ouis*, ΔᾶϜος *Dauus*, ὠϜόν *ouum*.[330] Another Aeolic feature

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[328] The Greek source seems to have been the product of a non-rigorous and prescriptive Atticism; cf. VALENTE (2014) and SONNINO (2014).
[329] See for example *GL* 2, 15.1-2: *u uero loco consonantis posita eandem prorsus in omnibus uim habuit apud Latinos, quam apud Aeolis digamma.*
[330] *GL* 2, 253.19.

which he says the Romans followed is the use of a diphthong where common Greek has /a/, and therefore the Romans say *Aesculapius* instead of Ἀσκληπιός in the same way the Aeolians say νύμφαις instead of νύμφας or φαῖσιν instead of φασίν.[331]

Then Priscian finds a similarity with Doric when describing the changes that final *s* may undergo; /s/ turns to /n/ in *sanguis sanguinis*; it turns to /r/ in *flos floris*; to /d/ in *custos custodis*, and so on; this phenomenon is compared by Priscian with the Doric ὄρνιξ in place of the common ὄρνις, to which is due the change of *s* to *x* in Latin: *Aiax* instead of Αἴας et *pistrix* in place of πίστρις.[332] In this discussion dedicated to the letter *s* Priscian saw also a pairing between /s/ and the Greek aspiration, which is actually the correct explanation due to the development from the Proto Indo-European consonants **s-*, **w-* and probably **Hy-* to the aspirate in Greek (see Giannakis 2014, *s.v.* psilosis). He gives as examples the words *semis*: ἥμισυ; *sex*: ἕξ; *septem*: ἑπτά; *se*: ἕ; *sal*: ἅλς,[333] and provides further evidence of the connection between /s/ and aspiration by resorting to the Boeotian dialect which apparently had *muha* instead of *musa*, with the change of intervocalic *-s- > -h-*.[334]

Things seem different when turning to consider the impact of Greek on Latin syntactic structures, an influence which may be less easy to detect (see Biville 2002, p. 95). In the *De constructione* besides the Attic dialect Priscian mentions only once Thessalian and Macedonian in an interesting passage that concludes the seventeenth book,[335] where Homer appears to be the source for all the Greek dialects, as Priscian understood them. In this passage Priscian ventures into demonstrating the reasons why in Latin most nouns have identical nominative and vocative;[336] this turns out to be an explanation of morphology through rhetorical uses.

Notably, Priscian turns to two Greek uses; the first is adopted by the *Attici*, who may employ the nominative of a noun instead of the vocative as expected, as in

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[331] Cf. *GL* 2, 38.5-6.
[332] Cf. *GL* 2, 32.14-19.
[333] Cf. *GL* 2, 32.19-21.
[334] Cf. *GL* 2, 33.1-3. Modern studies ascribe the change of intervocalic *-s- > -h-* to Laconian which is a dialect included in the West Greek group, traditionally known as Doric (COLVIN 2007, p. 44). It should be also noted that this intervocalic *-s-* undergoing the development to *-h-* is subsequent to the elimination of initial and intervocalic **s* which was one of the traits of Proto-Greek (cf. GIANNAKIS 2014, *sv*. Proto-Greek and Common Greek). The development *-s- > -h-* was repeated in some dialects as in Laconian (for a list of examples see MITCHELL 1984, pp. 715-18).
[335] See *GL* 3, 208.2-22.
[336] We know that the vocative case only exists in part of the nominal system, namely only for singular nouns and proper names of the second declension, and the corresponding adjectives; where it is lacking, the nominative is used instead (see PINKSTER 2015, pp. 1224-27). For a thorough overview of the problems concerning the vocative of Latin words ending in *-ius*, see DICKEY (2000).

the Homeric verse: ἠέλιός θ᾽ ὃς πάντ᾽ ἐφορᾷς καὶ πάντ᾽ ἐπακούεις ("and you Sun, who watch over all things and hear everything" *Il.* 3, 277), where ἠέλιος is said instead of ἠέλιε. To support it there follow two Latin examples which in the words of Priscian conform to the Homeric use: *corniger Hesperidum fluuius regnator aquarum* ("O river-god bearing horns sovereign of Hesperian streams" *Aen.* 8, 77), where *fluuius* is said instead of *fluuie*;[337] and *degener o populus, uix saecula longa decorum / sic meruisse uiris* ("O degenerate people, it would be hardly [lawful] that men had deserved in this way a long time of glory" *Phars.* 2. 116-17) where *populus* is said instead of *popule*.[338]

The second Greek use was adopted by Macedonians and Thessalians, who contrary to Attic speakers had masculine a-stem nominatives with 'vocative' form, as shown by the Homeric verse αὐτὰρ ὁ αὖτε Θύεστ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνονι δῶκε φορῆναι ("and again in turn Thyestes gave it [sc. the sceptre] to Agamemnon to carry" *Il.* 2, 107),[339] where Θύεστα is used in place of Θυέστης. Priscian concludes his lesson on the use of one case where another is expected with listing nouns which apparently have the nominative formed according a "Greek vocative": *sophista*, *citharista*, *poeta*, *Scytha*, *Sarmata*, *Sosia*. Priscian supposes that these nouns of Greek origin have the nominative in -*a* because it imitates the Greek vocative (σοφιστά, κυθαριστά, and so on).

Since in Latin the first declension nominative and vocative coincide, Priscian's claim might have appeared weak, and therefore two further literary examples containing second declension terms are given: *censoremue tuum uel quod trabeate salutas?* ("or because you salute, wearing a *trabea*, your censor?" Pers. *Sat.* 3, 29) where *trabeate* is said instead of *trabeatus*;[340] and *macte / uirtute esto*[341] ("bravo, well done" Hor. *Sat.* 1.2, 31-32) with *macte* instead of *mactus*.[342]

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[337] PINKSTER (2015, p. 1226) considers *fluuius* in this example as a subject complement.
[338] The vocative *popule* is not attested before the fourth century (see PINKSTER 2015, p. 1225).
[339] Priscian in this verse writes δῶκε "gave" instead of the verb that is found in the Homeric vulgate λεῖπε "left". He may have been misled by the numerous occurrences of δῶκε in the previous verses (cf. *Il.* 2, 102-107).
[340] The vocative of an adjective is sometimes used in poetry for a subject complement (see PINKSTER 2015, p. 1225).
[341] *Macte uirtute* (*esto*) is an exclamation of applause or congratulation. *Macte* might have been perceived as an adverb (cf. OLD, *s.v.*). *Mactus* ("glorified", "honoured") is otherwise an adjective used mostly in the vocative to address the gods.
[342] This last couple of examples seems not to be very appropriate actually because vocatives are requested by the dialogue exchange of the two satires. From the end of the first century CE the use of the nominative instead of a vocative increases (PINKSTER 2015, p. 1227); Priscian's remark could be

The section lends itself very well to exemplifying Priscian's working method as a reuse of Greek elements. His source is here Apollonius Dyscolus, more precisely a passage from the third book of the Περὶ συντάξεως where Apollonius discusses cases of *hypallage*, namely interchanges between the use of cases. [343] By looking at Apollonius we see that Priscian reused the same subject and the same Homeric quotations, but not passively. He integrated the Greek theory within the Latin linguistic context, added Latin literary examples, and worked also on the Homeric verses given by Apollonius by completing them with the second colon which was not given by Apollonius.

Moreover, in Apollonius' discussion the mention of dialects bore on the claim that the use of one case where another is expected (*hypallage*) is accepted as a poetic figure only if some dialects show the phenomenon in ordinary use, otherwise it would be considered inadmissible (ἀπαράδεκτος). It is for this reason that Apollonius speaks of Attic figure (Ἀττικὸν σχῆμα) and Macedonian or Thessalian custom (Μακεδονικὸν ἔθος ἢ Θεσσαλικόν) respectively for the use of the nominative for the vocative and for the opposite figure. In doing so, he makes also reference to his predecessors, namely Hellenistic commentators. How does this contrast with what Priscian is doing?

Priscian transferred a discussion of the acceptability of certain syntactic case shifts occurring in poetry as figures of speech to a linguistic context where the nominative and the vocative almost always coincide. Priscian gives the raison d'être of a Latin morphological feature through a syntactic and rhetorical explanation; he described therefore a phenomenon that applies to most Latin nouns by adapting what was presented by Apollonius as a poetic exception. It is interesting to note that Apollonius had made plain that whenever there is morphological coincidence between the nominative and the vocative of a noun there is no need to call it a "figure" since the interchange must be clear to see a figure; Priscian instead justifies this coincidence as a rhetorical device. Therefore, while in Apollonius' discussion the dialects served as an explanation of the use of particular syntactic constructions, in the context outlined by Priscian "Attic", "Macedonian" and "Thessalian" are a sort of metalanguage.

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also due to the fact that by his time in everyday speech nominatives were replacing vocatives also in second declensions words, a feature evidenced in the Romance languages.
[343] Cf. *GG* 2.2/3, 300.8-302.2.

When reading Priscian's passage, it must also be noted that there is a stratification of scholarship spanning several centuries to consider; first there were the Alexandrian scholars of third and second century BCE, who commented on Homer's texts and were responsible for the textual transmission of Homer; these are the "predecessors" whose textual commentaries Apollonius Dyscolus used in the second century CE for grammatical purposes.[344]

Priscian's Greek-speaking audience might have been familiar with the rhetorical figures there implied and with their provenience; nevertheless, the notions of "Attic", "Macedonian" and "Thessalian" were transferred in, and their use in the context of Latin became only a way to describe a particular morphological feature. The distinctive mark of language which Attic, Macedonian and Thessalian had in the original source, was obliterated in the transfer from the source into Latin. Nor did every reader of Priscian, even less western readers of Priscian, have a background knowledge of Homeric studies;[345] they might have wondered why *Il*. 3, 277 conveyed an Attic use when the words were pronounced by Agamemnon, or why *Il*. 2, 107 conveyed a Macedonian or Thessalian use when the verse represented Homer's words.[346]

The passage analysed above is significant because it is the only one in which Priscian mentions different Greek ethnicities in explaining aspects of Latin morphology. Throughout the *Ars* he uses predominantly the adjective *Graeci*, often in opposition with *nos*, and in the Atticistic lexicon he uses mostly *Attici*, which was the mark left by the use of a Greek lexicon on Attic uses. The Greek figures of speech to which he refers in the passage analysed above were originally thought to convey a syntactic reversal of case function, whereas he used them in support of a Latin morphological phenomenon. He was not interested to compare Latin and the Greek

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[344] Traces of the comments of the Alexandrian philologists are found in the *scholia* which have come to us accompanying the text of Homer in various manuscripts (see NAGY 1997). The *scholion* on *Il*. 3, 277 records as an Attic figure the nominative ἠέλιος being used instead of the vocative ἠέλιε, and the *scholion* on *Il*. 2, 107 tells of the use of the vocative Θύεστα instead of the nominative Θυέστης; the reference to a Macedonian or Thessalian custom is here lost (ed. THIEL 2014).

[345] It should be remembered anyway that in the East Homer continued to be a primary textbook, and was learnt by heart, especially the *Iliad*, throughout the Byzantine Empire (see BROWNING 1975). For a survey of the education system in Byzantium and further bibliography, see MARKOPOULOS (2008); for a study of education and culture in the West in late antiquity, see RICHÉ (1972).

[346] To ancient readers Homer's poetic diction displayed a Ionic character overall, with the insertion of more archaic or non-Ionic elements (see HORROCKS 1997, p.194), while modern studies recognise that "the primary dialectal layers of Homeric diction are Ionic and Aeolic" (HORROCKS 1997, p.196). Thessalian belongs to the Aeolic branch of Greek dialects together with Boeotian and Lesbian (East Aeolic).

dialects, because otherwise he could have considered other dialectal features that were worth comparing. [347] Instead he adapted the discussions of his source and the terminology therein to fit specific features of Latin. It can be agreed therefore that some Greek references within Priscian's text are only remnants of the transfer process from Greek to Latin. These remnants, as they become a sort of metalanguage, are nevertheless important because they are evidence of the ideological reuse, conscious or unconscious, of the pairing of Greek and Latin.

3.9 **Conclusions**

A close reading of the *De constructione* reveals the intricate stratification of scholarship that in Priscian's hands became a product addressed to members of the eastern elite.

Latin scholarship shows that by Priscian's time a comparative study of Latin and Greek phonology, morphology and vocabulary was undertaken; from the end of the fourth century teaching practice had produced an established body of knowledge about linguistic contact between Greek and Latin. Latin grammarians adopted Greek principles and procedures, but the demands of the teaching practice in the East led to something new in the Latin grammatical tradition.

It seems that a Latin syntactic tradition developed from positioning Latin and Greek side by side; Greek was the mirror through which Latin teachers were able to show differences and peculiarities of Latin, and in so doing they developed a discourse about their own language. Indeed, we are not dealing with a systematic theory on syntax, but with observations of a syntactic nature. It is in this development of ancient grammatical studies that we identify the framework for Priscian's comparison between Latin and Greek constructions.

Priscian's books on syntax reveal the traces of the pedagogical context of the time. The use of the *illi/ nos* narrative builds on the tradition of listing *idiomata* and serves as a way to introduce the different instances of language given by Priscian to explain the topics under discussion. The underlying framework of the text appears

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[347] He would have probably drawn a comparison between one of the characteristics of Aeolian dialects, namely the patronymic adjective in -ιος instead of the genitive of the father's name (see COLVIN 2007, p. 43), and Latin possessive adjectives of the sort of *Agamemnonius*, *Telamonius*, *Euandrius* which he mentioned in some of his *exempla ficta*, as for instance: *Telamonius filius fuit Aiax* which equals *Telamonis filius fuit Aiax* (*GL* 3, 218.18). See also *GL* 3, 161.17.

reduced to an interaction between what constitutes the two cores of the work: being Greek and being Roman.

While *illi* and *nos* refer to two distinct linguistic and cultural groups, Priscian's teachings reveal instead integration, and focus on explaining the functioning of Latin to students who may know Greek better. We find therefore the use of Greek metalanguage, a rephrasing of Latin syntactic constructions, a translation into Greek of Latin examples, the resorting to claims that Latin follows a Greek fashion.

Notably, this claim was possible because of the learned tradition that Greek and Latin formed a pair in the context of the other languages of the empire; we assume that it was also facilitated by the fact that the linguistic situation in the East saw the emergence of instances of language that intermingled elements of Greek and Latin, leading to a sort of Graeco-Latin lexical koine (see Biville 2002, pp.100-102). Language contact and the increasing gap between the standard Latin taught at school and the vernacular constituted a challenge for teachers, who had to maintain the knowledge of a prestige form of language among members of the Graeco-Roman elite.

In the following chapters I shall focus on the large number of literary quotations and *exempla ficta* that fill Priscian's text and constitute the linguistic data that support Priscian's comparison between the Greek and Latin usages.

Multi et diuersi usus ab auctoribus utriusque linguae[348]

4.1 **Introduction**

In the second chapter I considered the decisive influence of the Greek grammatical substratum exercised on Priscian's conception of grammar and the way in which he speaks about grammar. In the third chapter I also suggested that Latin studies of syntax had impulse in the East from the school practice of analysing and describing Latin usages on the basis of the language of the learners, namely Greek, a practice that produced collections of *idiomata* and grammatical analyses that made use of a *Graecus mos*.

In this chapter, instead, my study focuses specifically on Latin, keeping any reference to Greek in the background; the discussion will consider therefore issues concerning the Latin linguistic *continuum* and the Latin literary corpus. In particular, this chapter will focus on the use made by Priscian of instances of linguistic constructions. My aim is here to give an insight into Priscian's conception of construction by looking first at the metalanguage used and then at the examples of language that he drew from literary authors, by paying particular attention to the criteria for selection followed by Priscian in defining these models of language. After all, Priscian's project to transfer into Latin a Greek work covering the topic of the combination of words was promoted by the fact that knowledge of syntax was necessary to read and comment on the authors; in Priscian's words: [*constructio*] *orationis perfectae, quam admodum necessariam ad auctorum expositionem omnium diligentissime debemus inquirere.*[349]

An analysis of Priscian's Latin should take into account the fact that there are at least three different kinds of Latin within the *Ars*, all of them observing the norm of the standard language: the Latin in which the *Ars* is written, the Latin of the authors Priscian quotes, which is anyway multifaceted, and the made-up Latin of the *exempla ficta*. Quotations and *exempla ficta* are used by Priscian in different ways and fulfilling different functions. In this chapter I will look at literary constructions, whereas in the fifth chapter I will consider the made-up constructions, viz. the *exempla*.

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[348] Cf. *GL* 3, 278.10-11.
[349] *GL* 3, 108.7-8. Cf. GG. 2.2/3, 2.2.

4.2 **Priscian on the construction of words**

A grammarian, even a modern linguist, usually works on the basis of grammatical sentences of the language they want to describe, sentences which seem to them correct and complete. This is the subject of Priscian's study too; it is expressed at the beginning of the seventeenth book, where Priscian sets out to deal with the *ordinatio siue constructio dictionum*[350] ("the arrangement or construction of words") which is necessary to obtain a complete utterance: *ad constructionem orationis perfectae.*[351] This was in turn a rendering of αὐτοτελὴς λόγος,[352] which Priscian read in Apollonius' text; in fact, he both translated and quoted in the original Greek this clause so central to the discussion.[353]

Priscian therefore discloses that the core of his study consists of meaningful constructions. It must be remembered that he does not draw them from the language he spoke, but mainly from the usage of authors (*usus auctorum*), who were selected for their *auctoritas*. This was really the norm among ancient grammarians; ancient grammars described the written language which was felt to be the standard form of the language. Even the faults of speech, namely barbarisms and solecisms, were explained drawing examples from the authors, although in the fifth century Consentius decided to draw his examples of linguistic errors from everyday speech rather than from literary quotations.[354] This seems to be an essential difference between ancient grammatical studies and modern descriptions of languages which instead are usually based on the standard everyday usage of an idealised homogeneous speech community. In this regard, since it is difficult to imagine for sixth century multilingual Constantinople a homogeneous speech community,[355] we should rather think of a homogeneous literary speech community.

What does Priscian mean with the word *constructio*?[356] In the whole *Ars* there is no a clear definition of it, but its meaning can be inferred from the passages in which Priscian actually explains how words can be arranged together to form a construction.

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[350] *GL* 3, 108.2.
[351] *GL* 3, 108.7.
[352] *GG* 2.2, 2.1.
[353] *GL* 3, 108.19.
[354] Cf. VAINIO (2000, pp. 36-40) and MALTBY (2012).
[355] Cf. MILLAR (2009).
[356] On the notion of *constructio* as understood by later grammarians who read Priscian's work, see KNEEPKENS (1990).

As has already been said, Priscian's project of transferring Apollonius' Περὶ συντάξεως into Latin was the first complete attempt in the Latin tradition to account for syntactic issues.[357] The subject matter, as set out by Priscian, was modelled on Apollonius' work; in fact, there was no fixed Latin term to denote what Greeks called "syntax". To render in Latin σύνταξις, Priscian himself thought necessary to use the two words **ordin**atio or **con**structio dictionum which together translate the two parts σύν and τάξις. In this regard, we need to consider that it is the Greek word itself that shaped Priscian's understanding and description of syntax, in the same way the metalanguage of his source text influenced in general Priscian's understanding of grammar (cf. chapter 2).

A *constructio* arranges together single words; Priscian (by following Apollonius) opposes his new study to previous works which dealt with the parts of speech realised individually and considered independently from each other (*singulae uoces dictionum*).[358] We can think of *absolute* as the opposite of syntax; it is an adverb related to the verb *absoluo*, "to make loose", "to detach" that recurs several time in Priscian's text and refers to the use of different parts of speech with no need of adding any other part to make full sense.

For Priscian, the minimum syntactic structure for a meaningful and acceptable construction consists at least of a noun (a subject) and a verb,[359] for otherwise the result would be an *imperfecta oratio*.[360] As explained below, according to ancient grammatical thought the primary and essential role of noun and verb in constructions derives from their ontological priority in comparison with the other parts of speech.

In the process of development of language, nouns and verbs were formed before the other parts on account of their inherent reference to substances of the external world.[361] Nouns and verbs allow talk about the world because language is a

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[357] An earlier attempt was made by Varro in the *De lingua Latina*, but it seems to have been without continuators (cf. TAYLOR 1993; ZETZEL 2018, pp. 31-58).

[358] Cf. *GL* 3, 108.5.

[359] Cf. *GL* 3, 116.6-8.

[360] Cf. *GL* 3, 116.9-10.

[361] That nouns and verbs hold the first two places in the hierarchical list of the parts of speech is said extensively throughout the seventeenth book of the *Ars*, see as an example *GL* 3, 116.26-28 (cf. *GG* 2.2/3, 18.5-8). It is worth reminding ourselves that ancient grammatical scholarship adopted and developed the belief in a natural relationship between words and things from philosophy (cf. PL. *Cra.*). Rhetorical thought built upon this first stage in the creation of language a theory of a natural word order to account for pleasing and beautiful compositions, which was subsequently reflected also in the *artes*; already Dionysius of Halicarnassus provided evidence of this theory in his essay *On literary composition*: "I thought I should place nouns before verbs (since the former indicate the substance, and the latter the accident, and in the nature of things the substance is prior to its accidents), [...] I thought

description of the world, and as substances are the agents in the external world, thus nouns and verbs constitute the key construction in language. Their rank is also reflected in the metalanguage: *nomen*/ ὄνομα and *uerbum*/ ῥῆμα are absolute or primary terms unlike the terms denoting the other parts of speech, which is to say that they do not need to resort to other grammatical terms in order to be semantically or functionally explained. The terms *pronomen*/ ἀντωνυμία are explained in relation to *nomen*/ ὄνομα; *participium*/ μετοχή in relation to both *nomen*/ ὄνομα and *uerbum*/ ῥῆμα; *aduerbium*/ ἐπίρρημα find an explanation in the terms *uerbum*/ ῥῆμα; *praepositio*/ πρόθεσις is explained by its setting before nouns and verbs; *coniunctio*/ σύνδεσμος on account of its function of binding together.[362]

This way of explaining the parts of speech was typical of ancient school practice, both Greek and Roman, and is also found in Byzantine scholarship as is evidenced in the collection of *scholia* on Dionysius Thrax' Τέχνη γραμματική which gathers together teaching material from the *auditorium* of Constantinople.[363] Such explanations show once again how studies of (meta)language affected the whole understanding of grammar.

While it is understood that grammatical terms derived from Hellenistic grammatical scholarship and that the morphological and semantic structure of the terms themselves reflects ancient linguistic analyses, it is also true that the particular semantic components of such terms influenced in turn any subsequent grammatical analysis, and often linguistic views were based on and justified on the basis of the meaning of grammatical terms. As an example, I shall present the view on pronouns:

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it right to put my nouns before my adjectives, common before proper nouns and pronouns before common nouns, [...] the indicative should precede the other moods, and finite verbs infinitives" (D.H. *Comp*. 5; transl. by USHER). In the progress of the argumentation Dionysius of Halicarnassus abandoned the topic because in analysing actual compositions there were many counterexamples (see TAYLOR 1993, p. 275, and DE JONGE 2015, pp. 997-1000). In the Roman tradition Varro adopted this theory when discussing etymology in the *De lingua Latina* (cf. BLANK 2008).

[362] In the Latin grammatical *Artes* the eight parts of speech may be found listed in different orders. LENOBLE, SWIGGERS & WOUTERS (2001) group these orders according to three main strategies: the first is based on a distinction between declinable and indeclinable parts, and follows more closely the Greek model (it is the one used by Priscian too); the second is structured in couples in order to facilitate learning, as is found in Donatus; the third instead shows the verb in the last position.

[363] Cf. *GG* 1.3, *praef*. iii. One of the passages I refer to is *GG* 1.3, 357.27-358.9; noun and verb are said to be the "principal" and "more genuine" parts of speech (κύρια γὰρ καὶ γνησιώτερα μέρη λόγου); all the other parts, which are not referred to with proper nouns (οὐδὲ γὰρ ἰδίοις ὀνόμασι κέχρηνται) but on the basis of their use (ἀπὸ τῆς χρείας), have been invented to complete the syntax (πρὸς τὴν τελείαν σύνταξιν ἐπινενόηται).

> Loco nominum pronomina ponuntur, non, ut quidam existimant, propter nominum ignorantiam. [...] Sed manifestum quod quia non possunt nomina in prima et secunda esse persona, ut ostendimus.[364]

> Pronouns are used instead of nouns, but not, as some people think, out of ignorance of nouns/names. […] On the contrary, it is clear that they are used because there cannot be nouns in the first and second person, as we have shown.

This passage is drawn verbatim from the second book of Apollonius' Περὶ συντάξεως,[365] and shows that some teachers analysed wrongly the syntactic function of pronouns based on a superficial interpretation of the word "pronoun" itself. A correct reading of the metalanguage was instead made by Apollonius and Priscian. This shows that the metalanguage and the reading of it could affect grammatical analyses.

It is interesting to note that Priscian, although he had followed Apollonius by listing the noun in first position (because it is an expression of substances), and the verb in second position (because it expresses what substances do or undergo),[366] was forced to give an explanation that accounted for the fact that in Latin all the parts of speech are generally referred to with the word *uerbum*, contrary to Greek where words are generally named ὄνομα by virtue of the ontological priority of nouns.[367] Through a metalinguistic reading Priscian was able to highlight the special status that verbs have since they may constitute a meaningful construction also on their own by the understanding of a nominative, namely a subject.[368] This reading was not possible in Greek, where the special status of the verb could not be explained in the same way. Priscian therefore innovates the way in which the rationale of the key grammatical terminology was explained.

The present analysis of Priscian's understanding of constructions leads to consideration of the semantic properties of such constructions. It should be noted that ὄνομα and *uerbum* are grammatical terms that refer to words considered as parts of speech in a general and absolute way; but when ancient grammarians referred to the arrangement of words together they resorted to the terms λέξις[369] and *dictio*. From the

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[364] *GL* 3, 148.25-149.5.
[365] Cf. *GG* 2.2/3, 154.5-10.
[366] See page 107 of this thesis.
[367] Cf. *GL* 3, 117.4-7 and *GG* 2.2/3, 19.2-6.
[368] Cf. *GL* 3, 116.27-117.5.
[369] According to Diogenes Laertius (third century CE) φωνή, λέξις and λόγος were the three key concepts around which the Stoics constructed their theory of speech. Φωνή is the "noise, sound, voice, vocal utterance"; λέξις is the "writable sound", the linguistic unit of form which is not necessarily

definitions given by grammarians it is clear that they intended the λέξις/ *dictio* as a meaningful word,[370] a linguistic unit characterised by an accent and a meaning, namely a combination of form and meaning, as modern construction grammar would describe it.[371] Thus, Priscian specified that a *dictio* differs from a simple syllable with respect to *sensus* and *accentus*,[372] and that every *dictio* indicates and expresses something (cf. *dictio dicendum, hoc est intellegendum, aliquid habet*).[373]

The view that language was formed by form-meaning pairings was extended by ancient grammarians also to the next level of complexity of language, namely the phrase (λόγος/ *oratio*). In this respect, Priscian (as well as Apollonius) dealt with clauses expressing a complete sense; *perfecta oratio* is in this case the phrase often used by Priscian; it is a linguistic unit that we may call "construction". As it was for the notion of *dictio*, similarly an *oratio* presents both a proper form, which comes from the apt arrangement of words together, and a complete sense. Great importance was accorded in the first place by Priscian to the form, on which the meaning seems to depend in some respects. In every construction the link between form and meaning is unique, and therefore the meaning of a construction goes beyond the meaning of single words considered separately. Single words may have different meanings (*uarietas significationis*) and express a clear and unique sense only if considered in a construction, as for example verbs like *hortor* which may be used with an active or passive meaning: *hortor te* or *hortor a te*.[374]

Therefore, when considering a *perfecta oratio*, two different levels of meaning come together: the inherent meaning of the words (*dictiones*) taken singularly, and the overall meaning of the construction given by the correct arrangement of these words. As we said above, the minimum syntactical structure for a *perfecta oratio* is a noun and a verb, or better, a substance and a verb, which can be therefore expressed by a verb alone, since it is characterised by personal endings. In this last case, a perfect

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meaningful; λόγος is the "meaningful sound" or "meaningful utterance", the linguistic unit of meaning. For these definitions see LAW (2003, pp. 38-42).

[370] Therefore, the grammatical notion of λέξις differs from the Stoic theory of λέξις as a writable sound which does not necessarily convey meaning.

[371] According to the modern view of construction grammar constructions are "learned pairings of form with semantic or discourse function" (GOLDBERG 2006, p. 5). Construction grammar analyses appeared in the 1980s; for an introduction and further bibliography, see HOFFMANN & TROUSDALE (2013), CROFT (2007) and GOLDBERG (1995; 2006).

[372] *GL* 2, 51.15: *distat syllaba a dictione et sensu et accentu.*

[373] *GL* 2, 53.14-15.

[374] Cf. *GL* 3, 200.6-7.

construction needs not be ambiguous; a verb in the third person singular, for example, needs to be in composition with a noun or pronoun in order to identify the subject (*ut incerta significatio finiatur*).[375] Priscian is clear when he says that syntax is necessary for the understanding of an utterance: *constructio maxime ad eas explanandas* [scil. *diuersas significationes*] *est necessaria*.[376]

This is true for all linguistic items, since they can be ambiguous with respect to their meaning; it is the whole construction that eventually shows the idiosyncratic meaning of each of its components.[377] The same concept expressed by Priscian may be found by looking once again at the *scholia* on Dionysius Thrax' Τέχνη γραμματική: "in a construction the arrangement of words comes before the meaning since a clear meaning is produced by the arrangement and agreement of words together".[378]

Although in the *De constructione* there is no a clear-cut definition of *constructio*, from the evidence given above it follows that *constructio* or *ordinatio* refers both to a meaningful sentence, and in this case it is a synonym of *perfecta oratio*, a combination of form and meaning, and to the process itself of arranging single words together. Priscian's notion of *constructio* it is not a purely formal definition; it is a semantico-syntactic definition, which reveals and addresses the focus of ancient grammatical thought, i.e. the concern for the reading and interpreting of texts.

4.3 **Priscian on literary language**

A good knowledge of how syntax works is beneficial to the reading and interpretation of all authors (*ad auctorum expositionem omnium*), says Priscian at the beginning of the *De constructione* as a selling point of his work. First of all, it is worth underlining that this is an important change made by Priscian to his Greek source which spoke instead of ἐξήγησις τῶν ποιημάτων ("interpretation of poetry").[379] In this regard, we see that Priscian's teaching lies in the Latin tradition marked by Quintilian, who instructed his readers by saying that reading poetry was not enough to become an orator.[380] In the *Ars* we find this same assumption, and we understand why Priscian's project aimed at renewing Latin studies among the elites; a work of syntax was useful

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[375] Cf. *GL* 3. 157.23-28.
[376] *GL* 3. 200.16-17.
[377] Cf. *GL* 3, 200.16-25 and *GL* 3, 201.9-10.
[378] See *GG* 1.3, 114.10-12: ἡ δὲ σύνταξις προτέτακται τῆς σημασίας, ἐπειδὴ διὰ τῆς συντάξεως καὶ τῆς συνθήκης τῶν λέξεων τίκτεται ἡ τῆς σημασίας σαφήνεια.
[379] *GG* 2.2/3, 2.2.
[380] Cf. QVINT. *Inst.*, 1.4,4.

to anyone aiming for a wide literary knowledge, which in turn was a prerequisite to perform rhetoric. In the sixth century, rhetorical formation was still a strong cultural aspect for members of the elite.

Why was a knowledge of syntax necessary for the elite? From the fourth century the attention of grammarians had been directed to the features of standard written Latin, and teaching tools focused on explaining the usage of authors, forms dismissed by the more recent usage and figures of speech. The Latin of the classical authors was very different from lower varieties of the linguistic *continuum* which were spoken by the population. It was the standard Latin that was reproduced by members of the elite in their rhetorical exercises such as declamations or in composing poetry. Authors were a source of quotations, themes and situations which had to be understood first in order to be eventually reused.

By focusing on the role of syntax in interpreting language Priscian offered his readers a new tool for coping with literary Latin. The *De constructione* aimed to give an insight into the structures of a prestige form of language, which constituted a difficult task for both the Greek-speaking and Latin-speaking elites. It is worth remembering that although in the East the majority of population spoke Greek, there were also Latin-speaking residents from Italy, North Africa and Illyricum, whose everyday language must have been a spoken variety of Latin. Priscian put his emphasis on ways to interpret constructions because those constructions were not self-evident at first reading.

Priscian gives a syntactic reading of clauses and rhetorical figures more explicitly than the way in which Apollonius had addressed the topic in his treatise; we see for example that the following claims are not drawn from Apollonius, but constitute Priscian's own material: "you will find many examples with different parts of speech which you will not be able to interpret unless you follow the logic behind their arrangements; you should relate suitably cases with cases, genders with genders, numbers with numbers, persons with persons and tenses with tenses", and then "clauses clear any confusion with respect to their meaning through the arrangements of their parts and through the morphology", and finally "every construction must be confronted with what it means; the authors used to change the inflected forms in a construction according to different figures, and although it seems that there is

something wrong in the arrangement of the words, nevertheless it appears that they make perfect sense as a whole".[381]

In this respect Priscian's analysis was not too different from modern studies of ancient languages based on literary texts, and the teachings that he addressed to his students seem very similar to those that a modern teacher would use to teach classical languages. For example, he is concerned with the correct parsing of the item *poetae* which may be genitive or dative singular, or nominative and vocative plural; only its usage in a construction can dispel the doubts.[382] The same can be said for the adjective *bonis* (dative plural); since it can be applied to all three genders Priscian points out that the syntax of a construction (*ordinationis iunctura*) will dispel any confusion related to gender, as in *bonis uiris loquor*; *bonis mulieribus loquor*; *bonis mancipiis loquor*.[383]

We assume that by Priscian's time the gap between the standard literary language and the spoken varieties of Latin showed a significant increase compared with the linguistic situation of the two previous centuries. Priscian seems to say that an effective way to deal with literary Latin is now through a syntactic analysis; the previous teaching tools are not that effective.

Previous grammarians used to deal with syntactic issues when discussing both the figures and the faults of speech which could occur in spoken and written Latin.[384] This practice still reflected the importance of rhetorical training over a knowledge of formal grammar. In this regard, Priscian, unlike most of his predecessors, including Apollonius,[385] paid scant attention to barbarisms and solecisms.[386] Priscian focused on structures and rules of a fixed language, which was conveyed to him by the uses of a *corpus auctorum* and rejected the practice to use literary quotations to draw examples of barbarisms and solecisms. Priscian' focus is more formal than rhetorical.

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[381] See *passim GL* 3, 200.16-201.16; cf. *GG* 2.2/3, 299.4-12.
[382] See *GL* 3, 200.16-21.
[383] *GL* 3, 201.2-10. A lower variety of the linguistic *continuum* would have used instead *loquor* with the preposition *ad* plus accusative, which avoided any ambiguity concerning the gender of the adjective (cf. PINKSTER 2015, pp. 140-146).
[384] Cf. BANNIARD (2012).
[385] For example, cf. *GG* 2.2/3, 297.18-300.7.
[386] In the *De constructione* the word *soloecismus* is employed by Priscian just once (cf. GROUPE ARS GRAMMATICA 2010, p. 25-29). In most of the Latin *Artes* (Sacerdos, Donatus, Charisius, Diomedes, Consentius and Dositheus) there are sections of various lengths dedicated to faults and virtues of language (*de uitiis et uirtutibus orationis*).

What were for Priscian the sources of good syntax? In a passage of the seventeenth book modelled on Apollonius, we see the criteria of linguistic acceptability which Priscian subscribes to. Priscian states that a language issue may be solved by looking not only at poetic constructions (*ex poetica constructione*), but also at the way of speaking of learned men (*ex communi elocutione doctorum*) and especially at constructions of prose-writers (*maxime a scriptorum constructione*).[387] What is significant here is that Priscian, in a hypothetical order of importance in describing good syntax, puts prose constructions first, and then substitutes the significance that Apollonius found in common everyday usage (ἡ κοινὴ φράσις ἄπασα) with the *elocutio doctorum*; the common everyday usage was not reliable for Priscian. In preferring the phrase *communis elocutio doctorum* to the simple *communis elocutio*, Priscian shows that the latter probably sounded too corrupted to be a criterion of correct language.

The perception of the gap between the prestige language and lower varieties of the *continuum* certainly constituted an element of distinction for members of elite, who prided themselves on being able to read, understand and occasionally use the prestige language. The use of this language belonged to a different socio-linguistic situation compared with the practical need of Latin in imperial bureaucracy. It is also worth pointing out that, although Latin was expressed by different varieties and had undergone phonological, morphological, semantic, and syntactic changes, it was still perceived as unitary, and grammar was the principal factor of unity.[388]

In order to understand to what extent Priscian was concerned with written standard Latin, I want to draw a parallel with a passage from Dante's *De uulgari eloquentia*. The linguistic background that we assume for Priscian's time is clearly different from that in which we place Dante, between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Italy. Dante's words, nevertheless, may help to understand the progressive detachment of a language defined by grammatical rules (standard Latin) from the actual use of the language (vernacular varieties) which was increasingly deviating from the standard. Dante was concerned with the existence of two distinct languages: the vernacular language and the *gramatica*. To consider Dante's linguistic theories in the *De uulgari eloquentia* means to look at a stage in which the separation between

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[387] Cf. *GL* 3, 155.5-15 and *GG* 2.2/3, 161.9-162.10.
[388] Changes clearly appeared more in lower varieties of the linguistic *continuum*.

prestige form and vernacular was complete and recognised, and by doing so, we can assess with insight an earlier stage in which the detachment was still in progress.

> I call 'vernacular language' that which infants acquire from those around them when they first begin to distinguish sounds; or, to put it more succinctly, I declare that vernacular language is that which we learn without any formal instruction, by imitating our nurses. There also exists another kind of language, at one remove from us, which the Romans called *gramatica* [grammar]. The Greeks and some - but not all - other peoples also have this secondary kind of language. Few, however, achieve complete fluency in it since knowledge of its rules and theory can only be developed through dedication to a lengthy course of study[389] (transl. by Botterill 1996).

We see that to learn the *gramatica*, which is to say Latin, requires a formal instruction of its rules and theory, and its mastery could be achieved only through study and dedication. *Mutatis mutandis*, for Priscian, and the Latin elite he addressed, the prestige language was a secondary kind of language; Priscian resorts to the words of authors, who had become by his time canonical in the school tradition, as exemplars of such a language.

Literary texts were held in high regard because of the quality of language they transmitted, namely a "grammatical" language which began to be more challenging to reproduce. To maintain contact with this language was essential to elites for the perpetuation of their status. It is nevertheless true that, with hindsight, knowledge and use of Latin in the East declined by the end of the sixth century and gave way to the use of Greek alone; this fact shows how fragile the attempt to prolong Latin learning among elites was in the sixth century.

We can also imagine that being learned in literature and adhering to old classical models was becoming increasingly difficult. We cannot forget that traditional education was a pagan education, and that in the sixth century, especially in the age of Justinian, who brought a great deal of change in the imperial attitude towards the non-Christian classical tradition, there were attempts to limit the influence of pagan elements on culture and society (Maas 1992). Moreover, at certain levels of society

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[389] *DVE* 1, 2-3: «Vulgarem locutionem appellamus eam qua infantes assuefiunt ab assistentibus cum primitus distinguere uoces incipiunt; uel, quod breuius dici potest, uulgarem locutionem asserimus quam sine omni regola nutricem imitantes accipimus. Est et inde alia locutio secondaria nobis, quam Romani gramaticam uocauerunt. Hanc quidem secundariam Greci habent et alii, sed non omnes: ad habitum uero huius pauci perueniunt, quia non nisi per spatium temporis et studii assiduitatem regulamur et doctrinamur in illa».

this knowledge may even have been questioned as the sufficient and indispensable qualification to hold positions of power if we read correctly John Lydus' remark on the praetorian prefect Cyrus of Panopolis, who held such an important office "although he knew nothing but poetry".[390]

A last remark on the status of Latin in the East and on the role that Priscian played in reaffirming its importance for the elite, can be done by considering what happened to Latin in the West from the sixth century onwards, which brings us back to Dante's views. The everyday written standard Latin underwent some significant changes in its syntax, vocabulary and style, which in post-Renaissance Europe came to be designated as medieval Latin.[391] If compared with the type of Latin that we usually define as "classical",[392] medieval Latin "developed an unadorned, utilitarian prose tending toward colloquial speech in its sentence structure, tone, and choice of words" (Auerbach 1965, p. 87), to which the ninth century Carolingian reform, which started on the initiative of Alcuin, tried to put an end by restoring a written Latin based both on the old models and on Donatus' and Priscian's *Artes* (Wright 2002, chapter 5).

Auerbach (1965) argues that the Carolingian reform led to a severance of "the bond between written Latin and the popular Romance tongue" (p. 119) because of the reformers' commitment to set the bar of quality of the Latin language in "models which derived from a remote past and an alien culture" (p. 121); to this reform is assigned therefore the responsibility for an "exclusively learned and literary" (p. 121) character of Latin which prevented written Latin from changing. Wright (2002) comes to the same conclusions, arguing that the "apotheosisation" of Priscian's analyses in the Carolingian education system "effectively turned Latin into a foreign language even for its native speakers" (p. 84). This was the linguistic situation which Dante referred to in his treatise.

Mutatis mutandis, did Priscian's work have the same outcome in the East in the sixth century? Indeed, it was the most complete and systematic study of Latin language of antiquity and was produced for an audience that needed Latin for practical

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[390] See LYD. *Mag.* 3, 42. It is understood that here John Lydus referred to a knowledge of Greek poetry. Nevertheless, the passage shows a negative judgment towards a learned person, maybe a sign of reproach to a certain kind of elitism.

[391] For an introduction to medieval Latin and further bibliography, see DINKOVA-BRUUN (2011).

[392] "Classical Latin" does not refer to an actual variety of Latin distinct from "early Latin", "late Latin", or from "vulgar Latin". Modern contributions to the subject are numerous; for the latest findings and studies see for example the series of conference proceedings *Latin vulgaire – Latin tardif*.

reasons in imperial offices, or in the army. The models of Latin taught by Priscian and offered in the first place for the benefit of the Constantinopolitan elite, had probably not that practical relevance; at least, this was not the reason given by Priscian for assembling his work. Priscian clearly says that he has collected the words of the authors, so that they might be useful to anyone who desires to pride themself on the praiseworthy achievements of Graeco-Roman erudition (*qui laudibus utriusque gloriari student doctrinae*).[393] Priscian's work certainly aimed at fixing a model of Latin that could not change; also, to play on the feeling of belonging of elites to a Graeco-Roman culture had more a socio-linguistic than a practical significance.

In the next section I am going to focus on the large number of quotations that Priscian gives his readership as models of *gramatica*. I shall consider their distribution throughout the *Ars*, and the *De constructione* in particular, and the period of the authors cited with the aim to give an insight into the choices made by Priscian when gathering these models of style.

4.4 *Corpus auctorum*: an established standard of language

Quotation from Latin texts which are now lost is a feature of Priscian's work that has been much appreciated by modern scholars of Latin literature. Indeed, we find a larger number of quotations in the *Ars* than in all previous Latin *Artes* and other traditional grammatical works. De Nonno (1990) has listed the main features of the different Latin treatises on language, namely glossaries, commentaries, works on prosody, scholarly treatises and technographic grammars, looking at the type and period of the authors cited, the density of quotations, and the purpose and manner of quoting. In De Nonno's survey, Priscian stands out in late antiquity most of all because of his quotation of a wide range of authors in a technographic work of the type which was generally characterised by the employment of a small number of canonical authors.

The words of these authors occupy an important position in the framework of Priscian's study. First of all, they are exemplars of the reference language of which the *De constructione* aims to describe the syntax. They were not only a source of language, but also a means by which a linguistic item was explained or demonstrated;

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[393] See *GL* 3, 278.12.

moreover, as we have made clear above, reading and understanding them was the objective for anyone who undertook grammatical studies.

In light of this a preliminary remark can be made; since Priscian drew standard instances of language mainly from literary texts, it follows that he did not consider uses that were proper to other kinds of texts. In this regard, it is interesting that he did not register, for example, the use of the infinitive in place of the imperative, the so-called jussive infinitive, which we find in didactic texts (cf. Pinkster 2015, p. 358), although he mentions it for Greek. Priscian says that while in Greek an infinitive can substitute for an imperative, in Latin it can replace an imperfect, which is clearly not the same. He refers to Apollonius' text where two Greek constructions were explained: first, the Homeric usage (Ὁμηρικὸν ἔθος) of substituting an imperative with an infinitive[394] and, secondly, the epistolary construction of the sort Τρύφων Θέωνι χαίρειν being equivalent to Θέων χαῖρε! On the other hand, Latin can use an infinitive in place of an imperfect when the main verb is omitted in constructions such as: *dicere* (*coepi*) in place of *dicebam*, with the ellipsis of *coepi*.[395] Although Latin admits the use of the jussive infinitive, Priscian seems to have glossed over this possibility; the *usus auctorum* did not cover all the possibilities of language.

The range of authors quoted by Priscian is large indeed, and although we are dealing with a Latin grammar we need to bear in mind that Greek authors too were often quoted by Priscian together with Latin authors. As regards the *De constructione*, the *modus operandi* adopted by Priscian was clearly affected by the nature of his Greek sources, which for their part conveyed a large number of Homeric quotations. The Latin grammarian did not fail to transfer most of them into the new framework of his treatise, especially in the seventeenth book, which is generally inspired more directly by Apollonius, but the operation is not limited to this. Sometimes it happens that Priscian completes Apollonius' text by adding words to quotations given by Apollonius; thus, while the Greek grammarian had preferred sometimes to quote only part of a Homeric verse, or paraphrase it, Priscian offers his readers the complete verse;[396] for example Priscian quotes at *GL* 3, 120.14 the verse *Il.* 1, 84: τὸν δ᾽ ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς, whereas Apollonius had quoted it

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[394] A study of this Homeric usage is ALLAN (2010); in Homer the imperatival infinitive is used 193 times (p. 205).
[395] Cf. *GL* 3, 228.6-19, and *GG* 2.2/3, 329.1-9.
[396] Often Apollonius merely suggests Homeric clauses or words because his readers could easily understand the context. See, for example, *GG* 2.2/3, 10.9-11.3 and cf. LALLOT (1997, pp. 98-99).

twice by the initial clause only: τὸν δ᾽ ἀπαμειβόμενος and had left the remainder of the line to the reader's understanding.

Moreover, in the seventeenth book Priscian quotes, when he does not follow Apollonius' text, a number of Greek prose writers besides the poets; he quotes Demosthenes seven times, Thucydides and Xenophon four times, and then to a lesser extent, Plato, Isocrates, Isaeus, Hyperides, Aeschines Socraticus beside Homer, Sophocles, Euripides and Phrynichus. Priscian compiles, therefore, a recommended reading-list of poets, orators, philosophers, and historians.[397]

The greater part of the quotations is of course from Latin authors; in the *De constructione* Vergil and Terence are the poets most quoted, followed by the orator Cicero and the historian Sallust, which makes Priscian pursue in this part of his work a restricted canon of authors, the same identified in the *quadriga Messii* (see p. 137).

It should also be remembered that since the *De constructione* relied on a miscellaneous collection of sources, Priscian did not make use of quotations in the same way throughout the work but was influenced by the type of source and its purpose. The *De constructione* appears to be not homogeneous in the way Greek and Latin authors are quoted, as is also evident from a brief look at the layout of the work. While in the seventeenth book there prevails an alternation of Latin and Greek quotations that have a moderate length of a few verses or lines, in the eighteenth book there is, for example, a section, which we have already encountered, that presents long extracts from the first book of Cicero's *Second Speech Against Verres* with the Greek translation of the verbal clauses inserted (see p. 123). This section on Cicero's usages is then supported by a few passages from Plato's *First Alcibiades* juxtaposed with a practical Latin translation (see p. 124).[398]

Moreover, the Atticistic lexicon at the end of the eighteenth book constitutes a stand-alone part in the framework of the *De constructione*, and this is reflected also by the range of authors quoted.[399] De Nonno (1990) points out that while Priscian generally in his *Ars* quotes not only from authors who were labelled as *ueteres* but also from the younger generation of authors represented by Horace, Ovid, Lucan, Statius, Persius and Juvenal, the Atticistic lexicon is mostly based on the authors of the

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[397] For a full list of passages, see GROUPE ARS GRAMMATICA (2010, index 1).
[398] See *GL* 3, 258.1-266.1.
[399] New interest in the Atticistic lexicon has been shown in recent years; for a new edition of the text and comment, see ROSELLINI (ed.) (2015) and SPANGENBERG YANES (ed.) (2017); for a study of the history of the text and Priscian's sources, see VALENTE (2014), SONNINO (2014), ROSELLINI (2010).

quadriga, and except for Terence there are no representatives of early Latin literature (Rosellini 2015, intro).

However, all the authors from Plautus to Juvenal are cited on account of their *auctoritas* on language issues, which seems closely connected to their belonging to an indefinite past. From the pages of the *Ars* is possible to detect the classification of authors on a temporal basis only very broadly because terms like *antiquissimi*, *antiqui*, *ueteres* and *iuniores* do not refer precisely to well-defined groups of authors; nevertheless, while throughout the first sixteen books of the *Ars* we come across sections that oppose the uses of the more ancient authors to the more recent ones, in the *De constructione* this opposition is less clear and the term *iuniores* is never used to oppose different generations of writers. Thus in the seventh book Priscian, while dealing with the vocative of second declension proper nouns in -*ĭus*, recommends the form in -*ī*: *Vergilius Vergili*, *Mercurius Mercuri*, and quotes in support Horace, who was one of the *iuniores*, but advises that the *antiquissimi* used to say *Vergilie* and *Mercurie* instead, as shown by Livius Andronicus and Laevius.[400] In the fifth book he opposes Vergil's masculine use of epicene nouns of animals ending in -*a*, such as *talpa* ("mole"), *damna* ("deer") and Horace's feminine use of those nouns.[401] In the tenth book Priscian opposes Afranius, Accius, Naevius and Ennius to Lucan, Statius and Martial with regard to which form of the perfect indicative of *scindo* to use, the former having *scicidi*, the latter *scidi*.[402]

An opposition between older and more recent usages might tempt us to think that Priscian had a perception of some kind of linguistic change; however, the *usus auctorum* was basically his only explicit category for older features of language, and therefore it is not possible to go beyond this literary horizon.[403] Nevertheless, it is plausible to assume that phonological or morphological changes spotted in texts, which had occurred over time in Latin and were not the standard at Priscian's time,

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[400] Cf. *GL* 2, 301.17-302.12.
[401] Cf. *GL* 2, 144.11-24.
[402] Cf. *GL* 2, 516.13-517.13.
[403] Inscriptions and documents might have also built his linguistic competence. There is a very interesting passage in the sixth book of the *Ars*, where Priscian claims to have read an inscription on the tripod of Apollo in Constantinople that shows the Aeolic use of digamma (cf. *GL* 2, 235.22-254.3). A branch of Roman grammar, starting probably with the Augustan grammarian Verrius Flaccus, dealt with the contrast between the more recent language and the older one (*New Pauly*, *sv*. M. V. Flaccus). This tradition had an important representative in the grammarian Caper (second-third century CE), who is one of the main sources of the *Priscianus maior* (cf. *New Pauly*, *sv*. F. Caper II, 14; and ZETZEL 2018, p. 286).

could be easily pointed out as old-fashioned usages. [404] Anyway, although Priscian was aware of differences between the *usus auctorum* and the standard Latin of his time, his focus was not on signalling such differences; the lack of comparison between generations of authors in the *De constructione* together with the scant attention drawn to solecisms show that in the last books of his *Ars* his focus was simply on recording turns of phrase that occurred in literary texts.

The scope of his work was to describe the peculiarities of the prestige language of elites, which grew out of idioms of which literary texts were a source; he was well aware that it differed from the working language and from the varieties of vernacular of his time. In this respect, I assume that it was easier to point out phonological or morphological changes than to record syntactic changes. It was difficult to account for syntactic changes occurring in authors who composed works of different kinds. Peculiar turns of phrase in literary texts may have been conceived by the author to meet different needs such as metrical reasons, the technicality of the subject, the tone and purpose of the work, the characterisation of personas, and others. Also, we need to consider the role of imitation and reuse of previous literature, which is connected with the literary taste of the period in which an author wrote.[405]

In order to evaluate the criteria for selection followed by Priscian, we need to consider further the extent of Priscian's interest in literary quotations. Once again, a distinction must be made between the two main parts in which the *Ars* is usually divided, books 1-16 (the *Priscianus maior*) and the *De constructione*. While the books on morphology encompass a larger number of authors, the *De constructione* restricts the number of models presented. I have already mentioned that the Atticistic lexicon is mostly based on the authors of the *quadriga* and constitutes therefore a stand-alone section within the *De constructione*; but it is the entire section on syntax that sees the number of authors drawn on being reduced.

Here below, I shall consider some of the Latin authors by looking especially at the beginnings of Latin literature and at the most recent authors quoted by Priscian.

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[404] Cf. *GL* 3, 70.13-71.6; Priscian registers adverbs ending in *-ter* which were used by the early authors but must not be used anymore (*inueniuntur et alia, quibus tamen non est utendum*), like *benigniter*, *saeuiter*, *ampliter*, *ignauiter*, and many others.

[405] Adams (2013, part 6) studies various aspects of subordination that occurred in early, classical, and late Latin, but with different attitudes on the part of writers and grammarians towards them. As an example, in early Latin there is evidence of the frequent use of the indicative in indirect questions instead of the subjunctive. The same feature is found in the classical period, although felt as colloquial, and thereafter in late Latin where it became widespread; see ADAMS (2013, pp. 762-770).

This is not a comprehensive list of authors; Terence, Vergil, and Cicero, who are overall the authors most quoted by Priscian, are the focus of attention in other sections.

	Priscianus maior (books 1-16)	*De constructione* (books 17-18)
Livius Andronicus	15	0
Naevius	19	0
Ennius	44	1
Lucretius	20	0
Sallust	84	44
Varro	41	0
Horace	103	39
Livy	25	7
Ovid	65	0
Seneca	2	0
Persius	23	10
Lucan	134	43
Petronius	2	0
Martial	5	0
Tacitus	0	0
Juvenal	103	27
Suetonius	4	0
A. Gellius	2	0
Apuleius	10	0

From the data above it is evident that Priscian in the *De constructione* is more selective when choosing the authors to quote as models for syntactic clauses. Clearly, he does not look for models for syntactic clauses in the earliest Latin authors, who are nevertheless sources of phonological and morphological peculiarities. In the same way, in the last two books he overlooks the authors of the so-called silver Latin period, except for the two satirists Persius and Juvenal, and the epic poet Lucan. This fact leads us to consider the cultural context of sixth-century Constantinople. While Persius had won a high reputation for his book of satires since its publication, with high praise from Quintilian,[406] Juvenal had a slower reception and became very popular just by the end of the fourth century;[407] by looking at Persius' and Juvenal's presence in grammatical treatises before Priscian, it is interesting to note that while Persius is mentioned at least by Charisius and Diomedes (though only three times by Charisius and once by Diomedes), Juvenal is quoted only by Priscian, with a few occurrences also in the *De constructione*, fourteen times in the Atticistic lexicon. Priscian's interest in Persius' and Juvenal's phraseology seems to have been followed by his pupil Eutyches, who quotes both the satirists three times each. No occurrences of Juvenal's turns of phrase are found in Charisius, Diomedes, Consentius, Dositheus or Macrobius. Lucan is also absent from Charisius' and Diomedes' treatises, but after the use that Priscian had made of him, is quoted by Eutyches seven times.

The statistical data above also show a rate of use of many authors that differs if we consider the two part of the *Ars*. For example, Lucretius, Varro, Ovid, Seneca, Petronius, Apuleius,[408] among others, are never quoted in the *De constructione* although they were used more or less widely in the previous books. This fact confirms that the *De constructione* was designed for an essentially different purpose, so that not all the authors could be presented as models of syntax.

An important part in selecting the authors to quote was played by studies on style and oratory; while a larger number of authors could be employed for the first stages of language learning, only a restricted number of canonical texts was supplied

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[406] See QVINT. *Inst.* 10.1.94.

[407] See MORTON BRAUND (ed.) (2004, intro.).

[408] Apuleius is the most recent of the Latin authors who appears in Priscian's *Ars*; never in the *De constructione* though. It should be noted that Apuleius is used as author of texts on philosophy, and not as the author of the *Metamorphoses*. Moreover, Apuleius is associated with the epithet *antiquus*, which shows that Priscian's perspective and consideration of different periods of Latin language were quite loose.

to students who undertook the rhetorical curriculum. In this respect, an account of Roman school system is not possible without looking at Quintilian's comprehensive training program for an orator.

Quintilian, in line with a common conception at the time, regarded grammatical knowledge as a preparatory step for rhetorical performance, and as Bloomer (2011) points out, although not everyone in antiquity ended up practicing oratory in court or in the senate, "the rhetorical curriculum encouraged the view that the orator stood at the head of society" (p. 117). It is general knowledge that such a curriculum continued to be offered to students throughout antiquity even though political changes determined in turn changes also in the state of oratory, as Tacitus hinted in the *Dialogue on Orators*, and declamations became a sort of fictitious exercise in substitution for rhetoric in the political arena.

Latin literary criticism of the early empire[409] was responsible, in discussions of the decline of the oratory, for the formation of a canonical corpus of authors; it was during those discussions that an opposition between the older and the younger generations of orators emerged, and consequently literary models were offered to prospective orators for imitation. The clearest example of this is represented by Quintilian's proposed reading list, which he provided in the hope of finding and preparing a new great orator. Simultaneously, grammar books, treatises on metrics and orthography began to flourish as tools useful to the study of those authors who became, over time, the school selections. In fact, the flourishing of grammatical studies "suggests that education became more concerned with written than oral skills" (Bloomer 2011, p. 172).[410]

Over four centuries after the literary criticism of the early empire the *De constructione* still echoes in some respects the primacy of oratory over grammar, or rather the continuity of a school curriculum that developed around the centrality of oral skills, but found in the sixth century a very different context. After all, Priscian clearly remarked on the importance of eloquence in his preface. If we look at the authors whom Priscian quotes in the *De constructione* and at the frequency with which they occur, we discover that they are the same as those in Quintilian's reading list; moreover Priscian seems to follow Quintilian's advice to imitate those "closer to them

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[409] A survey may be found in FANTHAM (1989).
[410] Most of the grammatical treatises that have been passed down to us date from the third to the fifth centuries.

in time and more useful for their discussion".[411] Quintilian claimed that some authors were certainly worth reading (*legendi quidem*)[412] but not all of them were useful to form style (*ut phrasin faciant*)[413]. Thus, observing Priscian's choice of selection, in the *De constructione* we note the presence only of those authors whom Quintilian regarded as useful to form style, whereas in the rest of the *Ars* Priscian mentions and quotes that large range of authors who were at least worth knowing and reading.

Lucan, Horace, Sallust for example are heavily represented in the books on syntax; Quintilian deems Lucan as "ardent, animated, very distinguished for his turns of phrase and more to be imitated by orators than by poets";[414] Horace among the satirist is "the terser and purer, the best";[415] Sallust is coupled with Thucydides and is endowed with "an immortal rapidity". Together with Sallust Quintilian praises Livy for his *iucunditas* and *candor*, for his eloquence and sentiment;[416] Livy is indeed quoted by Priscian too. On the other hand, Priscian quotes Lucretius, Varro, and Ovid, for example, only in the books on morphology, and a parallel may also be drawn with Quintilian's account. According to Quintilian Lucretius, although he is worth reading and deals elegantly with his themes, is difficult to understand;[417] Varro acquired his reputation as a translator and, although he was not a contemptible writer (*non spernendus quidem*) and was profoundly learned, deserves little credit for the advancement of oratorical skills; he simply contributes more to knowledge than to eloquence.[418] For his part, Ovid is deemed to be *lasciuus* in his style, both in epic and in elegy.[419]

The case of Seneca is also interesting, because he barely finds space in Priscian's work, being quoted only two times in the *Priscianus maior*.[420] Seneca had a particular place in Quintilian's discussion, and although Quintilian did not condemn Seneca's style altogether, he described it as corrupt for the most part (*in eloquendo*

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[411] See QVINT. *Inst*. 10.1.88: *propiores alii atque ad hoc de quo loquimur magis utiles*.
[412] QVINT. *Inst*. 10.1.87.
[413] QVINT. *Inst*. 10.1.87.
[414] QVINT. *Inst*. 10.1.90: *Lucanus ardens et concitatus et sententiis clarissimus et [...] magis oratoribus quam poetis imitandus*.
[415] QVINT. *Inst*. 10.1.94: *multum est tersior ac purus magis Horatius et, nisi labor eius amore, praecipuus*.
[416] Cf. QVINT. *Inst*. 10.1.101-2.
[417] Cf. QVINT. *Inst*. 10.1.87.
[418] Cf. QVINT. *Inst*. 10.1.87; 95.
[419] Cf. QVINT. *Inst*. 10.1.88; 93.
[420] Priscian quotes a verse from the *Phaedra* (v. 710) at *GL* 2, 253.8 and another untitled poetic fragment (fr. 4 HAASE) at *GL* 2, 333.16.

corrupta pleraque) and very dangerous because of its charming vices (*abundant dulcibus uitiis*);[421] hence the recommendation to prospective orators to be selective (*eligere modo curae sit*).[422] The school tradition after Quintilian seems indeed to have been selective with Seneca's work; Charisius has no quotations from Seneca, while Diomedes gives only two shorts extracts from works that have not survived.[423]

From the analysis of the data provided by Priscian it seems therefore that still at the very end of antiquity a work of grammar like the *Ars* reflected the traditional subdivision of the school curriculum which placed oratory at the top. The structure itself of the *Ars* shows this fact by devoting the last two books to a subject, the syntax, which built on rhetorical training, and by using a range of authors who were suitable to the scope and approved by tradition.[424] Priscian's choices of syntactic models derived from rhetorical rather than grammatical teaching. Although needs and situations by the time of Priscian had changed from those of the first centuries of the empire, the self-representation of elites, which was defined by the status given by oratory, resisted; grammar books themselves conveyed the idea that language served a higher aim than simple communication.

I have already mentioned that most of the Latin *Artes* before Priscian's *Ars* devoted part of their discussion to describing faults and virtues of speech. These were sections that dealt with the arrangements of words, turns of phrase to accept or to avoid; one of the elements that led to the development of a Latin syntax was indeed the presence of these sections of rhetorical concern. Priscian had the merit of separating these sections from the *De constructione*, and giving syntactic analysis a more autonomous status; he assumes for himself, the *grammaticus*, the role and the prestige that before were granted to the *orator*. Quintilian had claimed that, of the two kinds of figures of speech, the kind concerning the form of language was more a grammatical matter, while the kind concerning words arrangement was more a rhetorical matter.[425] Priscian with his *De constructione* claims the unity of a discipline devoted to language description; he uses arguments and topics drawn from rhetorical

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[421] Cf. QVINT. *Inst*. 10.1.125-131.
[422] Cf. QVINT. *Inst*. 10.1.131.
[423] See *GL* 1, 366.14 and 1, 379.19. They are respectively fr. 25 and fr. 75 HAASE.
[424] The domains of grammar and rhetoric were intertwined; if traces of the rhetorical curriculum can be seen in grammatical treatises, it is also possible to see grammatical theories in rhetorical treatises. On this aspect, see for example DE JONGE (2015).
[425] See QVINT. *Inst*. 9.3.2: *uerum schemata lexeos duorum sunt generum: alterum loquendi rationem uocant, alterum maxime conlocatione exquisitum est. Quorum tametsi utrumque conuenit orationi, tamen possis illud grammaticum, hoc rhetoricum magis dicere.*

training but strips them of their rhetorical function. What remains are the words of the authors and the grammar conveyed by them. Quintilian is a silent presence in Priscian's work; although Priscian never mentions him directly, he was one of the nameless Latin sources that Priscian chose not only to follow and implement, but also to improve.

If it is true that Priscian's selection of authors was influenced by previous discussions of oratory conveyed by the school tradition, it is also true that Priscian recorded the literary tastes of the time and was influenced by them too. If we look for example at the authors mentioned by John Lydus in his work *De magistratibus* it is interesting to note that Lucan, Varro, Horace, Sallust, Petronius, Persius, Juvenal and Apuleius are all present; no mention of the earlier writers Livius Andronicus, Naevius and Ennius, or of Seneca or Tacitus. John Lydus' list corresponds to Priscian's selection. Among the stand-out authors named by John Lydus are Varro, who is called the διδασκαλικώτατος and the πολυμαθέστατος of the Romans;[426] Sallust, who is recorded because he teaches clearly in his *History*;[427] Vergil is mentioned almost always with the epithet "poet of the Romans" without his name, which pairs him with Homer, the poet;[428] Horace, Persius, Juvenal and Petronius are interestingly called οἱ νεώτεροι, which shows how Latin literary discussions were common knowledge also among Greek elites;[429] Apuleius is referred to as a Roman philosopher.[430] John Malalas, a Greek chronicler who was active under the reign of Justinian, called Cicero and Sallust οἱ σοφώτατοι Ῥωμαίων ποιηταί.[431] Therefore, these were the Latin authors read or at least known in name in Constantinople at the beginning of the sixth century; Priscian used them in his work, but further selected the most suitable for the *De constructione*.

4.5 *Vsus auctorum* and linguistic change

From the use that Priscian made of literary quotations in his main work, we understand that the relationship between the traditional criteria of *auctoritas* and

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[426] Cf. LYD. *Mag.* 1, *pro*. 12 and 1, 5.21.
[427] Cf. LYD. *Mag.* 1, *pro*. 13-14.
[428] Cf. for example LYD. *Mag.* 1, 7.22.
[429] Cf. LYD. *Mag.* 1, 42.
[430] Cf. LYD. *Mag.* 3, 235.8.
[431] Cf. MALALAS 8, 32. It is interesting that Cicero and Sallust are mentioned by Malalas as "poets", a fact that probably shows how at some point in late antiquity ancient authors became only "names" even for educated persons; for a judgement of Malalas' poor culture see ROCHETTE (1997, p. 283); for another example of Sallust called "*poeta*" see MUNZI (2011, p. 36, f.n. 8).

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consuetudo/ *usus*, which were the two sources on which grammarians relied to find exemplars of correct usage, with *usus* being usually the usage of learned elites (cf. section 1.4), underwent a change of perspective. Priscian subsumed *auctoritas* and *consuetudo* into the single domain of *usus*, or rather, *usus auctorum*.

The fact that ancient grammatical discipline was so focused and based on usages of authors leads us to consider the peculiarity of the ancient understanding of language change. Modern linguistic analysis of the kind that resorts to usage-based theories to describe language deals with diachronic change to the extent that language use by adult speakers is responsible over time for developments and changes in language constructions (Bybee & Beckner 2015). Ancient grammarians and rhetoricians, by pursuing a proper command of literary Latin, were interested in differences in the writing of authors of different periods, and little attention was paid to the present fashion of language use.

Quintilian gives an interesting interpretation of changes occurring over time among the authors: "figures of speech have always been changing and they still do, whatever the force of language usage is. Therefore, if we compare the older *sermo* with our own, almost everything we say now is a figure. We say *hac re inuidere* ('to envy a thing') instead of *hanc rem* as all the ancients and particularly Cicero said; we say also *incumbere illi* ('to pay attention to him') for *in illum*, *plenum uino* ('full of wine') for *uini*, *huic adulari* ('to flatter him') for *hunc*, and many others".[432] What Quintilian meant with *sermo noster* cannot be defined without difficulty; the meaning of *sermo* ranges from "ordinary speech" to "language" and "speech" of a nation in general. Here it seems that Quintilian opposes the manner of expression of older authors like Cicero to the contemporary mode of speaking, and in so doing shows the attitude he assumes towards the linguistic performance itself: the contemporary act of speaking was judged by reference to literary products, which was the only possible understanding of language change. There was therefore an overlapping of planes between literary and ordinary spoken language; changes in spoken language were considered as deviations from literary language.

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[432] QVINT. *Inst*. 9.3.1: *uerborum uero figurae et mutatae sunt semper et, utcumque ualuit consuetudo, mutantur. Itaque, si antiquum sermonem nostro comparemus, paene iam quidquid loquimur figura est, ut* hac re inuidere*, non ut ueteres et Cicero praecipue*, hanc rem*, et* incumbere illi*, non* in illum*, et* plenum uino *non* uini*, et* huic *non* hunc adulari *iam dicitur et mille alia.*

What is interesting is the fact that the two planes are inverted if compared with our modern understanding of literary and ordinary language: Quintilian calls "figures" the peculiarities of the more recent manner of speaking, whereas we might see figures of speech as characteristics of a more organised and often rhetorical literary language.

By the time Priscian wrote his treatise on syntax, school practice had excerpted from the authors those usages that were fit for purpose. We suppose that the ordinary Latin *sermo* spoken by restricted ethnic groups in Constantinople had undergone further changes if compared with that of first century Rome, and therefore the perception of the newest and more recent turns of phrase in comparison with Cicero's language must have been very different: authors became a source of idioms, as is clear from the Atticistic lexicon section in Priscian.

No reference is made by Priscian to ordinary speech, and in Priscian's discussions there seems to be no overlapping of planes between literary and ordinary language as was the case with the passage of Quintilian seen above. The gap between literary Latin and ordinary speech was probably so self-evident that the two domains were felt as independent. Only the changes within the literary language were considered.

Having discussed the change of perspective concerning the traditional criterion of *usus*, which in Priscian's views merges with *auctoritas* and becomes a source of idioms,[433] I would also like to consider how Priscian uses it as a means for validating grammatical rules and therefore supporting the *ratio* of language (cf. section 1.4).

The rules of language were traditionally defined by the term *ratio*, which referred to the fact that they could be rationally expounded; language features had a reasonable cause which accounted for them. As a result of Priscian's merging of *auctoritas* and *usus*, which usually were two separated domains validating the *ratio*, the usages of authors become the only source of correctness. He often introduces them with clauses such as: *usus confirmat*; *usus approbat*; *usus comprobat*; namely "usage confirms, approves, demonstrates". This is Priscian's standard procedure for example for introducing two of the most highly regarded authors in the *De constructione*, Vergil and Terence, as we may see in the following examples:

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[433] A study on the domains of *auctoritas* and *consuetudo* with implications for the notion of orality in ancient Latin grammarians is BARATIN (1996).

1- *GL* 3, 170.16: *usus confirmat*; there follows a quotation from Vergil's *Georgics* and one from Terence's *Phormio*;

2- *GL* 3, 172.8: *non solum nostrum, sed etiam Atticorum usus approbat*; there follows a quotation from Vergil's *Bucolics*, one from Terence's *Adelphoe* and one from Plato's *Timaeus*;

3- *GL* 3, 179.11: *eorum* (scil. *pronominum*) *usus comprobat*; there follows a quotation from Vergil's *Bucolics*, two from Terence's *Eunuchus* and *Andria* and one from Cicero's *Against Verres*.

Baratin (1996, p. 49) argues that in Priscian's work the *usus* forms a domain opposed to the *ratio* of language; in fact, *usus* is the domain with which Priscian engages in his attempts to provide a validation of his linguistic competence. The only *usus* Priscian cared about was the one represented by literary Latin; *usus* was not for him synonymous with contemporary speech. It is for this reason that Priscian does not consider the possibility of changes in the language he described; it was not envisaged that such a language, as it stood, could undergo changes, and therefore Priscian simply records linguistic structures of a conservative language.

Indeed, authors may present turns of phrase that differ from those that analogy, *ratio*, would require, but it is their *usus* that eventually constitutes effective linguistic realisations. The words of these authors provide an answer whenever a compelling rule cannot be expressed, or even when language shows the lack of some forms;[434] authors can supply such forms on account of their *auctoritas* or because they hold a *poetica licentia*. There is a significant verse from Horace's *Ars poetica* which Priscian quotes to underline the power of authors to invent new forms when the language as it stands is deficient: "Why am I hated, if I have it in my power to invent a few words?" (*ego cur, acquirere pauca / si possum, inuideor*);[435] Priscian focuses on the verb *inuideor*, which Horace used passively although Latin grammar teaches that *inuideo* does not have a passive form.[436] Horace in turn may have calqued *inuideor* on the Greek φθονοῦμαι, and in so doing had put his attempt to promote the formation of new words based on Greek into practice (Brink 1971). By reporting Horace's words, Priscian leads us to consider the vitality of language as shaped by the practice of

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[434] See for example *GL* 2, 141.16-17; *GL* 3, 205.5; 25 and *GL* 3, 155.24.
[435] See HOR. *Ars P.* 55-56.
[436] See *GL* 3, 271.14-22.

writers, a stage that seems closed for Priscian, who could enjoy only the literary products of the past.

Moreover, Priscian does not go so far as to say that authors sometimes said things against the rules of grammar (which Diomedes had stated in his *Ars*),[437] to hint that contemporary standard language followed different rules. Diomedes uses the adverbs *crebro* ("often") and *uulgo* ("commonly") to express the extent of the present use as opposed to the *ueteres*.[438]

Also, while Diomedes seems to have acknowledged the force that the *usus*, seen as communication acts, had in language change, Priscian in his *Ars* leaves out of consideration this aspect of language and *usus* comes to indicate fixed exemplars of speech; we do not find in Priscian any claims that resemble Diomedes' opinion that "the present, in the guise of a teacher for the past age, has started to dislike the old way of speaking and to produce new words which may flourish and thrive as youth does".[439] The different attitudes of Diomedes and Priscian towards the possibility of language change further show the shift in the understanding of language in the sixth century, with the focus of linguistic description directed at the prestige form of language of the authors.

In light of the discussions in this chapter on literary language, in the last section I am going to consider a few passages from the *De constructione* that show the kind of reading of authors that took place in the eastern educational context.

4.6 *Auctorum expositio*

In reading the *De constructione* it is possible to see traces of explanations of authors of the sort that were typical of the school curriculum. Priscian's main source for the *De constructione*, Apollonius' Περὶ συντάξεως, had a significant leaning

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[437] *GL* 1, 400.19: *haec et alia apud ueteres reperimus contra morem doctorum posita.*
[438] Cf. *GL* 1, 400.15-18.
[439] Cf. *GL* 1, 400.8-10: *sed iniecit postera aetas manum et ueluti disciplinam pristini saeculi ita et sermonem fastidire coepit et noua uelut parturire uerba, quae iuuenum ritu ipsa modo florent et uigent.* With these words Diomedes recalls a passage from Horace's *Ars Poetica*, which he actually quotes partially afterwards. I refer to verses 60-72 which constitute a famous passage in which Horace proclaims usage as the principle governing language; words are compared to leaves in the wood which continuously change, the old ones die and new ones flourish, and *usus* is said to be the *arbitrium*, *ius* and *norma* of language: "As leaves in the woods are changed with the fleeting years; the earliest fall off first: in this manner words perish with old age, and those lately invented flourish and thrive, like men in the time of youth. [...] Many words shall revive, which now have fallen off; and many which are now in esteem shall fall off, if it be the will of custom, in whose power is the decision and right and standard of language" (transl. by SMART 1872).

towards the explanation of Homer's language and usages; Priscian in turn by expanding the range of authors quoted casts light on the more comprehensive Latin curriculum.

The study of those bilingual texts known as *Colloquia* (Dickey 2016) shows that among the texts read at eastern schools were certainly Vergil's *Aeneid*, Cicero's *Catilinarians*, Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae* and Terence's *Andria*, which remind us of the *quadriga Messii*. Texts by these authors were read, translated, and commented on by students learning Latin; the *De constructione* presents traces of these teaching materials incorporated in the wider grammatical treatise.

I have already mentioned above for example the section containing long extracts from the first book of Cicero's *Second Speech Against Verres* with the Greek translation of the verbal clauses juxtaposed with the Latin (p. 123).[440] We may refer to another passage in the eighteenth book of the *Ars*, where Priscian deals with usages of the infinitive.[441] In this section Priscian particularly draws from Sallust's works, with four quotations from the fifth book of the *Historiae*[442] and one from the *Bellum Catilinae*.[443] It should be noted that the fragments from the *Historiae* are transmitted to us by Priscian only, who is therefore an important source for the transmission of Sallust's annalistic work. Priscian developed his discussion of infinitives on the basis of Sallust's usage; we do not know whether Priscian had the whole work at his disposal, or (more likely) made use of teaching tools which collected extracts of Roman history;[444] however, the Roman past was a fashionable subject in sixth century Constantinople, as reflected in John Lydus' work, for example,[445] Malalas' chronicles and Peter the Patrician's *History*,[446] regardless of the use that Priscian made of the historians' linguistic usages.

Moving on to Terence, it is clear that Priscian read for himself Terence's plays, as is also shown by looking at a smaller work that Priscian wrote, the *De metris*

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[440] See *GL* 3, 258.1-264.15.
[441] See *GL* 3, 225.10-226.6.
[442] It survives only in fragments, among which four speeches and two letters of considerable extent. It was an annalistic account of events from 78 BCE (Sulla's death) to at least 67 BCE (Pompey's war against pirates). The fragments quoted by Priscian are nos 11; 12; 17; 18 in RAMSEY (2015).
[443] Cf. SALL. *Cat.* 1, 6-7.
[444] For a brief account of Sallust's reception in Antiquity and fortune in the ancient school tradition, see *New Pauly*, *sv.* Sallust (by MAES).
[445] For a study of John Lydus' work and his reuse of Roman past as a lens through which political tensions of sixth century were read, see MAAS (1992).
[446] For a brief overview and further bibliography, see CAMERON (2009).

fabularum Terentii, where he dealt with the metrical structures of Terence's comedies (cf. Jocelyn 1967). In the *De constructione* Terence is quoted about two hundred times; Priscian sometimes, when the occasion demands it, engages also in translating all or only part of the Latin text into Greek, which we know was a common exercise for Greek students at the time.[447]

The author who appears the most in Priscian's work is Vergil, with about four hundred quotations in the *De constructione* alone. Vergil represents in Priscian's work, as was well-established in the ancient school tradition, the excellence of Roman literature who was on a par with Homer: *qualis Homerus, fuit Vergilius* says one of Priscian's *exempla*.[448] Priscian sometimes translates his verses for student use, other times explains and interprets them, which we may imagine as the sort of explanations given in class. Thus, for example, in order to explain the use of what we now call an independent optative subjunctive, he quotes a passage from Dido's lamentation over Aeneas' departure, paraphrases it for his students and brings them vividly into Dido's mind:

Illud quoque sciendum, quod, quotiens paenitere nos rei non factae demonstrare uolumus, subiunctiuo utimur, ut Virgilius in IV Aeneidos:

Faces in castra tulissem
implessemque foros flammis natumque patremque
cum genere exstinxem, memet super ipsa dedissem.[449]

Id est *cur faces in castra non tuli, quod debui facere*? *Cur non impleui foros flammis*? *Cur non natum patremque extinxi et supra memet ipsa dedi*? Potest tamen et hoc possibilitatis esse. Ostendit enim, se potuisse, nisi demens fuisset, haec facere ideoque se paenitere.[450]

You should know that every time we want to express repentance for not having done something, we use the subjunctive, as Vergil does in the fourth book of the *Aeneid*:

"I could have carried torches
Into his camp, filled passage ways with flame,
Annihilated father and son and followers
And given my own life on top of all!" (transl. by R. Fitzgerald)

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[447] See for example these two passages from the *Andria*; *GL* 3, 250.18-20: *nam si illum obiurges uitae qui auxilium tulit, / quid facias illi, qui dederit damnum aut malum?* (*And*. 1, 143-44) τί ἂν ποιῇς ἐκείνῳ, ὃς ἄρα δεδωκὼς ἢ ζημίαν ἢ κακόν; *GL* 3, 257.10-12: *quin tu uno uerbo dic quid est quod me uelis?* (*And*. 1, 45) εἰπέ, τί ἐστιν ὅπερ ἄρα βούλοιό με;
[448] Cf. *GL* 3, 129.3.
[449] VERG. *A*. 4, 604-6.
[450] *GL* 3, 252.4-13.

That is: *why did I not carry fire into his camp? Why did I not fill his decks with flame? Why did I not kill father and son together and immolate myself on top of all*? Nevertheless, we can see that it is a matter of possibility, for she shows that she could have done this, had she not been demented, and therefore repents.

Another passage from the sixth book of the *Aeneid* illustrates the function of the indefinite pronoun *quis*. This is done by analysing Aeneas's words as he addresses his father:

Possum enim, uidens aliquem, scire eius et substantiam et gentem et qualitatem et quantitatem, proprietatem uero solam quaerere. Quod ostendit Virgilius in VI:

Atque hic Aeneas (una namque ire uidebat
egregium forma iuuenem et fulgentibus armis,
sed frons laeta parum et deiecto lumina uultu):
"**quis**, pater, ille, uirum qui sic comitatur euntem?"[451]

et substantiam enim et qualitatem uidens et quantitatem, tamen proprietatem quaerens quis dixit.[452]

I can in seeing someone know their substance, nationality, quality and size, but the one thing I have to ask is their name. Vergil shows us that in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*:

But here Aeneas
Broke in, seeing at Marcellus' side
A young man beautifully formed and tall
In shining armor, but with clouded brow
And downcast eyes:
              «And who is that one, Father,
Walking beside the captain as he comes?» (transl. by R. Fitzgerald)

Aeneas sees Marcellus' substance and quality, but he said *quis* to ask his name.

Priscian uses this Vergilian scene instead of an actual everyday scene, where someone, seeing an unknown person, might ask them their name. Was not easier for Priscian to resort to his daily experience to teach his students the use of *quis*? Vergil's words substitute for actual communication acts to which Priscian's audience might have been more accustomed.[453] We might think that this was not the way Priscian's contemporaries talked; it was, however, the way they came to see language.

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[451] Verg. *A*. 6, 860-63.
[452] *GL* 3, 123.6-9.
[453] In another case, however, Priscian resorts to a more common scene. When he had to express his opinion on whether the personal pronoun *tu* should be considered as a nominative or a vocative, first he agrees with Apollonius who thought that *tu* was a nominative, and afterwards claims that it could

One more thing should be said about the passage above; Priscian had Apollonius' text as his source for this point.[454] Apollonius referred to the Homeric passage *Il.* 3, 226-29, where Priam asks Helen who the big and noble Achaean man is that he can see from the top of the city walls. It is interesting to note how Priscian (and the school practice before him) drew parallels between the two national poets by finding similarities both of language and content in their works.

This kind of analysis, which Priscian carries out by using literary quotations, brings us back into the everyday routine of an ancient classroom. These short quotations and the way Priscian engages with them give us a taste of what was asked to students at that time, their readings, their linguistic concerns. Priscian's text also tells of a thorough connection and fusion between Greek and Latin cultures through the representatives of both literatures. The extent of this cultural phenomenon is evidenced by the detail of Priscian's arguments; connections between Greek and Latin are always sought and are the results of centuries of combined approach and study.

4.7 Conclusions

In this chapter I have shown that Priscian's project to turn to syntax after having expounded the parts of speech singularly in books 1-16, might be explained by the fact that in the sixth century in the East the understanding of Latin was that of a merely literary and written language which became harder to access and whose syntax needed to be accounted for. Indeed, from the fourth century ancient schools had changed the focus of their teaching to being more concerned with written than with oral skills (Bloomer 2011).

Throughout late antiquity, commenting on the authors and on their writings went hand in hand with the rhetorical training, which possibly led members of the elite to perform pieces of poetry or rhetoric as a display of their social status. At the beginning of the sixth century Priscian developed his teachings around the chief idea that Latin, as it was read in the literary works of the past, was not subject to change, but fixed in its syntax. Consequently, learning Latin at the level that elites aimed at, consisted of an immersion in the way authors constructed their utterances. The analysis

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also be a vocative, and outlines this example: "when we want to call someone whose name we do not know, or when we address a group of people in order to get an answer from anyone, such as when we say *tu*! to a group of slaves, in these cases that pronoun must be considered a vocative." See *GL* 3, 202.21-25.

[454] See *GG* 2.2, 32.4-8.

of Priscian's conception of *constructio* has shown that more attention started to be given to the arrangement of words as a means that enables the reader to grasp the meaning of sentences.

The language of the authors who offered a more appropriate insight into the use of grammatical rules was set as a high standard for elites; the more the "grammatical Latin" of the authors was offered as *the* model, the more there might have developed awareness among the elites of the qualitative difference between such a standardised language and the working language they used, not to mention vernacular varieties. We assume that over time the standard language began to reflect merely a sociolinguistic function, by conveying the linguistic and cultural identity of the elites, while other varieties of the *continuum* performed a more communicative function.

While a working knowledge of Latin was certainly useful to access positions of power, knowledge of the high standard of Latin gave access to the world of the elites by offering an initiation in the ancient classics. Priscian presented the rules of a language that had been fixed in and by the authors of the past, and at the same time anchored his readers to that past, which seems bounded by the second century CE.

A look at the authors quoted by Priscian shows that the canon of literary models in the sixth century followed the rhetorical instructions of Latin scholarship of early empire, which were taken up by Latin grammarians throughout late antiquity. The Latin technographic tradition was responsible for transmitting a defined canon of authors, with Terence, Vergil, Cicero and Sallust becoming the exemplars of poetry and prose. Priscian's work reveals the contribution of the Latin tradition to it, but also shows that more attention was given to the newest generation of authors, especially in the *De constructione*. While the traditional views of correct usage admitted both *auctoritas* and *usus* as criteria of language, in Priscian we observe that the two domains merged into the *usus auctorum*.

In the next chapter I shall consider the second type of examples with which Priscian enriches his *Ars*, and especially the *De constructione*, the so-called *exempla ficta*. Together with the literary quotations they serve as descriptions of language and are therefore an invaluable evidence of Priscian's teaching method. My analysis will shed light on a trait of Priscian's teaching that distinguishes him from his predecessors, and that has not been properly studied yet by scholars.

Exempla ficta: comprehensio dictionum aptissime ordinatarum[455]

5.1 **Introduction**

Priscian's *Ars* contains not only the largest number of literary quotations found in an ancient grammar, but also a large number of other examples which reflect the underlying rules of grammar and vary from a one-word item to an entire clause. Quotations and *exempla* shared the same status as illustrative evidence of language, and from an educational point of view they reflected the learner's need to experience grammatical structures in order to repeat them.

This chapter aims to give an overview of Priscian's invented examples, and to interpret them in light of the discussion of the standard language in the previous chapter. In considering Priscian's focus on a high standard Latin, which was not the everyday language of the contemporary Latin speaking elite, I shall assess to what extent the *exempla* formed part of the elites' linguistic experience. To do so, it is important to look first at the educational context in which this feature of Priscian's *Ars* developed, and to trace the steps of the emergence of *exempla ficta* as a substantial means of teaching within the ancient tradition of grammatical and rhetorical instruction. In doing so, my study also aims to consider to what extent Priscian's teaching practice was functional in transmitting not only a set of technical abilities, but also cultural knowledge and competence in the historical background of early sixth-century Constantinople.

In order to get an idea of the use and function of *exempla ficta* in the school tradition, some preliminary remarks should be made. First, the *exempla* are instances of Latin chosen by the grammarian, and relevant to his subject because of their phonological, morphological, semantic, or syntactic value. They stand alongside literary quotations with regard to their explanatory and accessory role in teaching grammatical rules. But while quotations were linguistic constructions that enjoyed through school practice a prestigious status, the examples invented by the grammarian appear to lack any aesthetic value, and their use is aimed at merely conveying the grammar. Both quotations and such *exempla ficta* are linguistically authoritative within the argumentative structure the grammarian places them, but while quotations

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[455] Cf. *GL* 3, 108.23-109.1.

exist beyond the teaching framework in which they are found, the *exempla* are a product of this framework and fulfil their role within it.

Quotations therefore come to the grammarian from the outside; they are examples of language to which someone gave existence by making precise and particular linguistic choices. The ways in which ancient authors combined words together to form grammatical constructions become in the grammarian's hands examples for teaching such rules. *Exempla*, on the other hand, belong to the teacher, and are tailored to the needs of the case and therefore based on the rules that are taught; the vocabulary is simple, the syntax is linear, understanding them is straightforward. This does not mean that all single-word examples that we read in Priscian's *Ars* were chosen by Priscian himself, and the same thing can be said for all clauses which serve in the *Ars* as syntactic *exempla*.

Moreover, since ancient grammatical treatises were composed in the context of tradition and previous scholarship, it often happens that the same quotations and *exempla*, especially single-word examples, are used throughout antiquity by different grammarians (cf. Munzi 2011). As Vainio (2000) states, "those examples which were used over and over again form the stock material from which the grammarians drew, if they had no particular reason for choosing a new example" (p. 30). With the term "examples" Vainio refers to both literary quotations and *exempla*; nevertheless, *exempla* are a teaching tool more suitable than literary quotations to be adapted and changed by the grammarian in the light of particular reasons or new teaching needs which may have occurred to him.

Although one may think, in view of the above, that such *exempla* are more likely to reflect the grammarian's contemporary language since they were made up by the teacher, it should be remembered that they are still an expression of the standard grammar of Latin or Greek under discussion. They are indeed grammatical instances of language made up by the grammarian, but the uses described are not necessarily the grammarian's contemporary uses (cf. Baratin 2012). This state of affairs does not prevent us from analysing Priscian's *exempla* as potential witnesses to linguistic change and also as evidence of linguistic features that belonged to the understanding of language contemporary to Priscian. This is something therefore that distinguishes the language of quotations from the Latin of the *exempla*; for example, the use of *ad*

plus accusative to express motion towards with names of cities is a symptom of linguistic change: *Aiax uenit ad Troiam, idem fortiter pugnauit contra Troianos*.[456]

Ancient grammars have been used by modern scholarship as possible sources of features which characterised the grammar of late Latin and early Romance. This type of study may be conducted on those parts of ancient grammars that dealt with the faults of speech, and on various comments on linguistic errors which were stigmatised by the teacher of the time. In fact, to detect features of Romance languages within ancient sources is not an easy task because, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, grammarians usually paid little attention to spoken language, of which Romance languages are a continuation (see Ferri and Probert 2010, pp. 28-38). Nevertheless, the case of Consentius, as shown by Maltby (2012), is evidence of some phonological and morphological features present in late spoken Latin. He was active in fifth-century Gaul and author of a treatise *De barbarismis et metaplasmis*[457] which unlike previous similar works appears to be original in its design because Consentius decided to draw his examples from everyday speech rather than from literary quotations. We know that usually grammarians took examples of barbarisms from literature, which may sound odd to us, and that there was often confusion whether a particular use was to be considered a barbarism or a figure of speech. Consentius reacts to this way of presenting faults of speech and turns his attention to spoken language; he contrasts the faulted form with the standard language. But Consentius is a case *sui generis* and usually the search for instances of spoken language in grammatical treatises is complex.

The case of Priscian is very different from that of Consentius, and his work fits into the traditional stream of grammatical studies. As we also saw from the study of quotations in the previous chapter, Priscian was not concerned with barbarisms and solecisms, and therefore the *exempla* he gave were instances of Latin (and Greek) validated by the tradition and by school practice.

In the present chapter I focus attention primarily on the large number of *exempla ficta* given by Priscian in the *De constructione*; they are examples of how a clause or a sentence can be properly arranged according to the rules of syntax. Priscian had to tailor his examples to the needs of his audience; in light of the reflections made

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[456] *GL* 3, 142.10.
[457] Barbarisms are faults in a single word which affect speech, while metaplasms are the same kind of faults which are nevertheless used as figures of speech for stylistic or metrical reasons.

in the second and third chapters, a reading of the *exempla ficta*, which looks at the language prevailing among Priscian's students, will reveal the references Priscian made between Latin and Greek, and will tell to what extent the underlying Greek model influenced his descriptions of language. In this respect, while in the seventeenth book a certain influence of Apollonius Dyscolus is still discernible, it is in the eighteenth book that Priscian plays around with arrangements of verbs and cases, and forms sets of *exempla* for his purposes. They may be studied as an expression of Priscian's linguistic understanding, helping to see more clearly Priscian's attitude towards the standard language, and possible influences of the language contemporary on the standard language.[458]

5.2 A typology of the *exempla ficta* of the *De constructione*

In this section I am going to consider the way the *exempla ficta* reflect the classroom situation, and to acknowledge Priscian's connection to earlier grammar books, especially Apollonius' Περὶ συντάξεως. This will serve to assess what kind of instruction was imparted through these invented examples and in particular to what extent they also encoded cultural knowledge.

In the teaching practice that precedes Priscian's contribution to grammar, the use of made-up examples serving as instances of a correct arrangement of words was not a common exercise; a small number of quotations served well this purpose. A treatise about syntax like the *De constructione* instead was designed to gather together examples of a correct use of Latin syntax. However, as we have seen in the third chapter, in Latin *artes* exemplars of correct syntax were given in sections (*De idiomatibus*) concerning case government. These were lists of correct Latin usages, usually extracted from literary quotations, as the Atticistic lexicon at the end of the *De constructione* evidences.

The *exempla ficta* relate to the syntactic rules expressed by the *idiomata* since they exemplify those rules. For the grammarian could choose to exemplify a syntactic rule either with a quotation or a made-up example. They represent instances of illustrative language, namely they serve to illustrate the grammar, and therefore we cannot say that they reflect *tout court* Priscian's language; they reflect Priscian's

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[458] HORROCKS (2017) shows that high-register Byzantine writings imitating Ancient Greek absorbed in some ways the grammar of the contemporary vernacular since those who imitated Ancient Greek "subconsciously reconceptualise*d* its older grammatical elements in contemporary terms" (p. 219).

competence in the standard language, as in modern Latin classes examples made up by teachers reflect their ability to master and reuse Latin structures in support of students' learning.

The Latin described in these *exempla* was therefore meant to be the standard language which was shown to the student by easy constructions. It is reasonable to think that learning grammar rules through these examples was easier than understanding a quotation, isolated from its wider syntactic and thematic context. Also, the ultimate purpose of offering the users of the *Ars* both literary quotations and *exempla ficta* as instances of communal language was the possibility of imitation. We can assume that any imitation of its structures led to strengthening its prescriptive force, since this was not the variety of language used in everyday communication.

If we consider the large number of *exempla ficta* contained in the *De constructione*, we notice the variety of subjects, references and themes they include, and although they are not all pieces of Priscian's imagination, taken together they portray the map of contents and reference world from which Priscian drew his examples.

We may consider Priscian's *exempla* in several respects.[459] A first group of sentences consists of those examples that Priscian modelled on Apollonius' examples;[460] if we look at the nouns employed, we notice a large number of names, especially of grammarians such as Tryphon, Dionysius and Apollonius himself, as in the examples: *quis nominatur Trypho*? (cf. τίς Τρύφων ὀνομάζεται;)[461] and: *et Dionysius scribit et Apollonius* (cf. καὶ Τρύφων διελέξατο καὶ Ἀπολλώνιος).[462] In this connection, mentioning teachers and previous grammarians was a way for the author to place himself within a long and authoritative tradition (Munzi 2011, p. 41); Priscian does the same, and mentions Varro, Donatus, his teacher Theoctistus and himself: *ego doceo illum*; *Theoctistus docet Priscianum*.[463]

The school environment was certainly one of the teachers' favourite situations from which to draw *exempla*, and therefore many sentences contain verbs as *legere*, *discere*, *scribere*, *studere*, *philosophari*, and so on. Priscian also drew from Apollonius

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[459] For a study of different types of *exempla ficta* in Latin grammar books, see MUNZI (2011).
[460] For a brief survey on the kind of examples in Apollonius' Περὶ συντάξεως see HOUSEHOLDER (1981, pp. 5-6).
[461] Cf. *GL* 3, 129.9 and *GG* 2.2/3, 100.16.
[462] Cf. *GL* 3, 161.9 and *GG* 2.2/3, 172.5.
[463] *GL* 3, 148.2-3.

a sentence which we may consider almost as the prime example of a course on syntax since it consists of representatives of each part of the speech: *idem homo lapsus heu hodie concidit*[464] ("Ah! the same man slipped today and fell down") which is modelled on: ὁ αὐτὸς ἄνθρωπος ὀλισθήσας σήμερον κατέπεσεν.[465] Priscian also translates into Latin two verses from the *Iliad* quoted in the first place by Apollonius; the Homeric Ζεὺς δ᾽ ἐπεὶ οὖν Τρῶάς τε καὶ Ἕκτορα νηυσὶ πέλασσε, [...] αὐτὸς δὲ πάλιν τρέπεν ὄσσε φαεινὼ ("Now Zeus, when he had brought the Trojans and Hector to the ships, [...] but he turned away his gleaming eyes" *Il.* 13, 1;3)[466] is translated by Priscian as follows: *Iuppiter postquam Troas et Hectora nauibus appulit, ipse reiecit oculos claros.*[467] The two grammarians were here dealing with the anaphoric use of pronouns, namely αὐτός and *ipse*, which stand for Ζεύς and *Iuppiter*.

Many examples are taken from Apollonius but it also happens that Priscian Hellenises a Latin *exemplum*, such as *obsecrat Cicero Varronem ut suum erudiat natum*[468] in παρακαλεῖ Πλάτωνα Ἀριστοτέλης, ἵνα τὸν ἑαυτοῦ φίλον παιδεύσῃ, with the interesting change of subject, or simply translates Latin clauses into Greek as we have already seen.[469] With regard to the reuse of *exempla* Priscian's dependence on Apollonius is evidence of the search for legitimacy and for creating a bond with the previous teaching tradition, which is also a recognition of being within a certain cultural horizon.

In light of this, a further example of continuous reuse of set examples goes beyond the Graeco-Roman teaching tradition; the nouns ἄνθρωπος / *homo* and ἵππος / *equus* were sometimes used in Greek and Latin grammars as preferred examples of the different kinds of substances/nouns and then also as components of illustrative sentences as evidenced by Apollonius' and Priscian's teaching.[470] Interestingly, this

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[464] *GL* 3, 116.11-12. The sentence is made up of a noun (*homo*), a verb compound of a *praepositio* (*concidit*), a pronoun (*idem*), an adverb (*hodie*), and an interjection (*heu*). Priscian substitutes the Greek article with the interjection only to maintain the words number. The conjunction could not be used because it would have implied another clause.

[465] *GG* 2.2/3, 17.4-5.

[466] Transl. by MURRAY (1999, Loeb).

[467] See *GL* 3, 141.22-23; cf. *GG* 2.2/3, 134.3-4.

[468] *GL* 3, 169.5.

[469] For example: *docuissem, si discere uoluisses* = ἐδίδαξα ἄν, εἰ μαθεῖν ἠθέλησας (*GL* 3, 251.15).

[470] Examples are: τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐλάκτισεν ὁ ἵππος ("the horse kicked the man" *GG* 2.2/3, 112.13-14); *bonus homo, celer equus* (*GL* 3, 133.4-5). The presence of "man" and "horse" in the teaching tradition has been tracked down to Plato and Aristotle, and later observed in the Stoic tradition (see VERSTEEGH 1977, p. 40); nevertheless, we may think that such words, although being paradigms of nouns' categories as established by the teaching tradition, were also two very common and straightforward terms which experience provided to grammarians, in the same way a present-day teacher may use "man" or "dog".

practice was later absorbed into Arabic grammatical literature where the same two words occur as examples of what is defined as a noun (Versteegh 1977, chapter 3).

The aim of the *exempla* was to teach a grammar rule by illustrating it, but their usefulness did not stop here. In fact, ancient examples were designed also to carry and pass on a stock of knowledge beyond the grammar of the language: i.e. they were didactically useful because of the meaning of the sentences themselves. From this perspective therefore two categories of *exempla* may be observed: the first consists of purely grammatical instances which are essentially *idiomata* or verbal clauses as *fecissem, nisi impedires*;[471] *lege ut discas*;[472] *placebas si diceres quod feceris*,[473] although a certain pedagogical message may be spotted also in these *dicta*. The second category is composed of sentences that taught bits of literature (*quis scripsit* Bucolica*? qui etiam* Georgica;[474] *qui scripsit* Bucolica *Vergilius magnus poeta fuit*;[475] *pulcherrimi sunt et Homerici uersus et Virgilii*;[476] *Aeneas praemia donat Euryalo*;[477] *Euandro filius fuit Pallas*[478]), history (*quis homo uincit Pompeium? Caesar*;[479] *patronum Verres Hortensium possidet*;[480] *cliens Tullianus fuit Roscius*;[481] *Cicero arguit Catilinam*;[482] *fortior Scipio Annibale*[483]), or bits of general knowledge or maxims that insist on moral qualities and actions (*gentis Romanae pars fuit fortis, pars sapiens*;[484] *literarum aliae sunt uocales, aliae consonantes*;[485] *quis utilis est aratro? bos*;[486] *quid est animal rationale mortale? homo*;[487] *magna uiris gloria est prudentia et fortitudo et pudicitia et iustitia*;[488]*bonus homo et iustus et rectus est ille, bona mulier et casta et pudica est illa*;[489] *tuum imperatorem et commilitonum sequere*).[490]

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[471] *GL* 3, 254.7.
[472] *GL* 3, 255.17.
[473] *GL* 3, 249.12.
[474] *GL* 3, 129.6.
[475] *GL* 3, 128.3-4.
[476] *GL* 3, 161.16-17.
[477] *GL* 3, 212.28.
[478] *GL* 3, 218.17.
[479] *GL* 3, 130.10.
[480] *GL* 3, 213.13.
[481] *GL* 3, 218.19-20.
[482] *GL* 3, 223.21.
[483] *GL* 3, 222.19-20.
[484] *GL* 3, 181.27.
[485] *GL* 3, 181.9-10.
[486] *GL* 3, 134.21.
[487] *GL* 3, 135.6.
[488] *GL* 3, 111.9-10.
[489] *GL* 3, 183.10-11.
[490] *GL* 3, 169.21.

As we can see from these cases, many of Priscian's *exempla* employ names drawn from the Greek and Roman epics, such as Achilles, Peleus, Hector, Aeneas, Euryalus, Andromache and so on, while other includes historical characters (mostly Roman): Plato, Aristotle, Hannibal, Scipio, Sulla, Cicero, Augustus, which all belong, as far as the Romans are concerned, to the republican and early imperial era; Augustus seems to be the *terminus ante quem* for the use of historical figures' names, a point to which I shall come back later.

Instructive *exempla* are also found in Apollonius' work, and we may imagine that in certain respects they were instructive for Priscian too, being a source of abridged knowledge. There is a passage in Apollonius' first book on syntax where the Greek grammarian composed *exempla* referring to dialectal features of Greek to illustrate the use of the adjective plural ἄλλοι with or without the article:

- οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι Ἕλληνες δασύνουσι τὰ ἐν τῇ λέξει φωνήεντα, Αἰολεῖς δὲ μόνον ψιλοῦσι[491] ("while the other Greeks aspirate the [initial] vowels of words, the Aeolians instead pronounce the same without aspiration");

- οἱ μὲν ἄλλοι Δωριεῖς τηροῦσι τὸ Θ, Λάκωνες δὲ καὶ εἰς Σ μεταβάλλουσι[492] ("while the other Dorians preserve the theta, the Laconians even change it to sigma");

It may be a coincidence that Priscian also dealt with Aeolic psilosis,[493] and surely it was a well known piece of knowledge among grammarians, but the case above is anyway evidence of the different forms in which basics could be imparted to and absorbed by later generations of readers. Literary, historical, and linguistic instruction was imparted through *exempla*.

There is another aspect that must be looked at when considering the continuation and sharing of the same body of knowledge in the ancient grammatical teaching tradition. The continuation of a system of knowledge assumes the feeling of belonging to and sharing a common cultural heritage. With the gradual Christianisation of all sectors of ancient society we see from the fifth century also a progressive Christianisation of the *Artes*, a switch that is visible in the choice of *exempla* which grammarians started to select from a religious frame of reference (cf. Munzi 2011). Priscian on the other hand remained anchored in the classical frame, and

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[491] *GG* 2.2/3, 54.2-3.
[492] *GG* 2.2/3, 54.4-5.
[493] Cf. for example *GL* 2, 35.13-17.

while it is believed that he was a Christian himself,[494] in his grammatical work there is no explicit reference to the Christian God or to Christian life.[495] While the *Ars* relates almost exclusively to the traditional classical culture, it has been noted that in the *Panegyric* Priscian juxtaposes traditional pagan and contemporary Christian elements (cf. Nicks 2000 and Ficarra 1978); also in the *Periegesis* we can detect a combination of old and new cultural features (see p. 60).

Moreover, it is worth noting that after the fall of the western empire the teaching of Latin diverged in the West and in the East; from that time onwards teachers of Latin in the West were exponents of the Church, culture and education in general were in the hands of religious elites, and episcopal and monastic schools took the place of public secular schools (see Riché 1972). In the East, on the other hand, where the language of the Church was Greek, the teaching of Latin was left to exponents of the traditional classical world. It is also for this reason that Priscian's teaching activity maintained its traditional setting and was not apparently affected by the opposition to classical culture experienced in the West.

In the next section, I am going to reflect further on the educational framework of the *exempla* and on the suitability of using them as a means to convey cultural knowledge, in addition to a set of linguistic skills. I will discuss to what extent *exempla* reflect the socio-cultural situation of early sixth-century Constantinople, in order to give an insight into the issue of cultural identity of elites in the sixth century.

5.3 **The classical and rhetorical frame of the *exempla***

The picture resulting from reading through the range of *exempla* made up by Priscian leads us to individuate a particular class of *exempla* which refer to a classical past, evoked by those historical figures who were the political players of the last century of the Roman republic. Moreover, this specific class of *exempla* reveals traces of the emphasis which schools placed on rhetorical training. Their status as a self-contained group is also reinforced by the practice of listing such *exempla* as sets showing a complete declension system.

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[494] Cf. KASTER (1988, p. 348); BALLAIRA (1989, p. 36) refers to Christian traits in the *Periegesis* and in the *Panegyric*, and to the presence of Biblical names among the *exempla*.
[495] Jupiter for example is still the implicit subject of meteorological verbs (cf. *GL* 3, 144.12). There seems to be only one passage in the *De constructione* alluding to Christian life (*GL* 3, 111.9-10: *magna uiris gloria est prudentia et fortitudo et pudicitia et iustitia*), but it is a later gloss rather than Priscian's own text (see HERTZ, *praef.*, p. xxix).

A look at the προγυμνάσματα, viz. the graded series of exercises training the student in the elements of a full speech, which provided a preliminary training for future orators, gives us further evidence of Priscian's ability to reuse and adapt rhetorical sources for the teaching of grammar. The following are two examples of Priscian's sets.

- *GL* 3, 223.24-28:

- *uictor Pompeii Caesar interfectus est a Bruto*
- *uictoris Pompeii Caesaris filia fuit Iulia*
- *uictori Pompeii Caesari cessit res publica*
- *uictorem Pompeii Caesarem placauit Cicero*
- *uictor Pompeii Caesar clemens fuisti*
- *uictore Pompeii Caesare Romana libertas periit*

- *GL* 3, 223.3-5:

- *Cicero accusans uicit*
- *Ciceronis accusantis oratio ualuit*
- *Ciceroni accusanti contigit gloria*
- *Ciceronem accusantem timuit Catilina*
- *o Cicero accusans Catilinam patriam seruasti*
- *Cicerone accusante uictus est Verres*

The way these *exempla* are organised, following the order of the cases, is reminiscent of a teaching practice, which developed in the East, related to one of the fourteen preliminary exercises to rhetoric (προγυμνάσματα) which are known as *chriae* (χρεῖαι), namely "a saying or action that is expressed concisely, attributed to a character, and regarded as useful for living" (Hock & O'Neil 1986, p. 26).

Just to recall briefly the influence of these rhetorical exercises on the ancient school curriculum, προγυμνάσματα were elaborated by Greek schools of rhetorical education from the Hellenistic period onwards, and were later adopted in the Roman world.[496] The oldest surviving treatise on these school exercises goes back to the first century CE under the name of the orator Theon. Other treatises were written by

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[496] For an introduction, texts, and a comment on Greek textbooks of rhetorical exercises, particularly on *chreia*, see KENNEDY (2003); HOCK & O'NEIL (1986 and 2002). Among the Romans Quintilian documented the training of the future orator, see especially *Inst*. 1, 9.1-6 for a presentation of the *progymnasmata* taught by the *grammaticus*.

Pseudo-Hermogenes between the second and third century CE, and by Aphthonius in the fourth century: this was the most influential treatise both in the East during the Byzantine period, and in the West during the Middle Ages.[497] Priscian played an important part in the circulation and preservation of these exercises into the Middle Ages since he translated the Pseudo-Hermogenes' Προγυμνάσματα, creating also the Latin term *praeexercitamina* out of the Greek.[498] He was therefore very familiar with this type of teaching tool and its formal features.

Chriae had been very popular long before school practice made them a fixed exercise, having been especially popular with philosophers as a means to capture within their brief and memorable form the teachings and behaviours peculiar to the representatives of a school of philosophy (cf. Hock & O'Neil 1986, p. 3). We know that such expressions were also used by grammarians as a means for practicing a noun's declension or a verb's conjugation, as evidenced for example by school texts found on wooden tablets from Egypt.[499] Such a practice was likely to be adopted also in teaching Latin, which is what teachers of Latin active in the East such as Diomedes, Dositheus and Priscian exhibit with their works. It is in this practice of declining *chriae* that we can see an antecedent for the *exempla* of Priscian that we have seen above. It is also worth looking at Priscian's predecessors.

It is Diomedes who discloses the relationship between *exempla* and *chriae*. Diomedes in his *Ars* makes use of *exempla ficta* mostly in two sections in the first book,[500] and significantly reports the expression *chriarum exercitatio* before declining some constructions, which gives evidence of the sources Diomedes used for his compilation. Forms and subjects of Diomedes' *exempla* clearly recall the Greek tradition:

- *GL* 1, 310.1-10

- *Marcus Porcius Cato dixit litterarum radices amaras esse, fructus iocundiores*
- *Marci Porcii Catonis dictum fertur litterarum radices amaras esse, fructus iocundiores*
- *Marco Porcio Catoni placuit dicere litterarum radices amaras esse, fructus iocundiores*

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[497] Cf. KENNEDY (2003), intro., and *New Pauly*, *sv.* Aphthonius.
[498] The Latin text of the *Praeexercitamina* is in *GL* 3, 430.1-440.12.
[499] See HOCK & O'NEIL (2002), pp. 56-66.
[500] See *passim GL* 1, 310.1-34 and 317.23-318.22.

- *Marcum Porcium Catonem dixisse ferunt litterarum radices amaras esse, fructus iocundiores*
- *o tu Marce Porci Cato, ne tu egregie dixisti litterarum radices amaras esse, fructus dulciores*
- *a Marco Porcio Catone dictum accepimus litterarum radices amaras esse, fructus dulciores*

The saying here attributed to Cato, "the roots of education are bitter, sweeter are its fruits", was well known in the Greek school tradition, and is found in many rhetorical textbooks and commentaries of late antiquity and Byzantine period; it was occasionally credited to different persons such as Isocrates, Demosthenes, Aristotle, Democritus.[501] The choice of Cato the Elder as the educative figure of Rome is interesting,[502] and as shown by Hock & O'Neil (2002, p. 67-73) Diomedes Latinised even the Greek formulae which were standard for introducing each case in Greek, and which have been transmitted to us in school tablets from Egypt.[503]

Diomedes enriched his exposition not only with *exempla Latina* but also with *Graeca* such as: *Demosthenes Atheniensis interrogatus quo modo orator factus sit respondit* "plus uino inpendens olei"[504] ("by spending more on olive oil than wine"),[505] or as the following declined *chria* (*GL* 1, 310.22-29) about the Cynic Diogenes of Sinope, who was the philosopher of whom the largest number of *chriae* were reported in antiquity (see Hock & O'Neil 1986). Diomedes did not repeat the saying in each case, but substituted it instead with the words *id quoque*:

- *Diogenes cynicus philosophus in die accensa lucerna quaerebat hominem*
- *Diogenis cynici philosophi memoria fertur, id quoque*
- *Diogeni cynico philosopho uisum est, id quoque*

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[501] Pseudo-Hermogenes for example has the following version: Ἰσοκράτης ἔφησε τῆς παιδείας τὴν μὲν ῥίζαν εἶναι πικρὰν τὸν δὲ καρπὸν γλυκύν (Ps. HERMOG. 3, 6. Ed. Les belles lettres, 2008). Diogenes Laertius in his work *Lives of the philosophers* attributes the same saying to Aristotle (D.L. 5, 18).

[502] Another *chria* reported by Diomedes is: *Marcus Porcius Cato dixit leges neruos esse ciuitatium* (*GL* 1, 310.20).

[503] Nom. *dixit* = ἔφη
Gen. *dictum fertur* = λόγος ἀπομνημονεύεται
Dat. *placuit dicere* = ἔδοξεν εἰπεῖν
Acc. *ferunt dixisse* = φασὶν εἰπεῖν
Voc. *ne tu egregie dixisti* = σύ ποτε εἶπας

[504] *GL* 1, 310.21-22. A syntactic note: the sequence of tenses in this indirect question does not seem to follow the prescribed rule, namely a pluperfect subjunctive for an anterior action in a subordinate clause depending on a historic tense.

[505] Demosthenes claims to have spent more time studying than drinking.

- *Diogenen cynicum philosophum aiunt diligenter, id quoque*
- *o Diogene cynice philosophe, optime dixisti, id quoque*
- *a Diogene cynico philosopho memoriae traditum est in die accensa lucerna quaesitum hominem esse*

The examples above show that eastern schools of Latin were the place where Greek and Latin cultural references mingled. The reuse by Latin grammarians of Greek teaching strategies and methods through a work of translation and comparison led to an absorption also of a wide range of figures and paradigms. Priscian follows this tradition of cultural dependence and exchange, and with the kind of *exempla ficta* he compiled wanted to teach his mostly Greek audience the basics of Roman history and culture, an essential body of knowledge in an abridged and simple linguistic form.

The deeds recalled by the *exempla*, such as Cicero's efforts against Catiline for the sake of the homeland, or Pompey's defeat by Caesar, must have entered over time the collective memory of Roman people, and were certainly known by the elites. We cannot be sure though that in the sixth century CE in the East Greek elites were well acquainted with the Roman past as much as previous generations might have been; if a comparison may be drawn with our own time, it should not be taken as a given that every educated person may know much about what happened for example at Waterloo other than to say that Napoleon was defeated there. An Italian person may recall that Garibaldi is remembered as the "Hero of the two worlds" but they will probably not be able to say what the epithet refers to. Napoleon, the Duke of Wellington, Garibaldi are in the wide collective memory of a people; their names evoke a limited number of facts, images, and sayings that form with those figures almost inseparable pairs. Examples of this sort were useful in the teaching of Latin because they were easy to remember; they allowed a straightforward reference to a fact, and were suitable in their simplicity to show the grammar that the teacher aimed to describe.[506]

In the fourth chapter (pp. 169-174) we had occasion to consider the influence that rhetorical training had on the structure of grammatical works, especially of the *De*

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[506] I want to refer to my personal experience as an English learner as further evidence of the double function *exempla* may have, useful both to learn grammar rules and basics of culture. For those unfamiliar with the Callan method, it is an interactive system to study English where students are continuously asked to repeat a set of sentences in the form of question and answer over and over again led by the teacher, learning them by heart, which enables students to acquire at once vocabulary, grammar rules, syntax but also notions of English culture; one of these sentences for example was: "who is the most powerful person in this country? David Cameron", which resembles Priscian's *exemplum*: *quis homo uincit Pompeium? Caesar.*

constructione. It is also clear from this presentation of *exempla ficta* that rhetoric exercised a profound influence on the development of Latin syntactic studies, and that the Greek model was followed and adapted. The inclusion of rhetorical preliminary exercises within the *De constructione* shows the link between these two domains of ancient education, viz. grammatical and rhetorical training. We can extend the scope of the discussion, and look further into the sources that, through the elaboration of rhetoricians and grammarians, paved the way for Priscian's work.

First, in considering the *exempla* as well-formed and complete propositions, useful to describe language, as Priscian's understanding of construction suggests, we may recall the ancient Stoic discussion of ἀξιώματα, namely logical propositions which were examined by philosophers in term of truth and falsity (see Taylor 1993). Evidence of these ancient discussions is a passage of Aulus Gellius (16, 8.1-14), where, after reporting Varro's words on the subject, by way of example he composes some axioms (or *proloquia*, as the term ἀξιώματα was rendered by Varro): *Hannibal Poenus fuit*; *Scipio Numantiam deleuit*; *Milo caedis damnatus est*; *neque bonum est uoluptas neque malum*. These propositions pair with the kinds of *exemplum* used by Priscian; they are only used in a different linguistic domain.

Secondly, the use of *chriae* in rhetorical training deserves a closer examination. They are only one of many exercises preliminary to the art of rhetoric concerned with the transmission of words and deeds of famous figures; it is worth noting that the ancient school system attributed great value to gnomic literature, and to collections of maxims, sayings and instructions which were ascribed to sages and great men of the past. It was a cultural phenomenon which reflected the high moral and didactic value of the past over the younger generations and their education.

In her study of literate education in the ancient world, Morgan (1998, chapter 4) outlines the characteristics of the Hellenistic practice of collecting gnomic texts, and stresses the differences between the Greeks and the Romans, with the latter more interested in the deeds of great men of the past than in general moral sayings or philosophical teachings; the collection *Memorable Doings and Sayings* by Valerius Maximus (first century CE) is an example of this literature. Quintilian's words are clear: "even more important [than the topics raised by philosophy] are the records of the notable sayings and actions of the past. Nowhere is there a larger or more striking supply of these than in the history of our own country. [...] Rome is as strong in

examples as Greece is in precepts; and examples are more important."[507] Moreover, the fact that many sayings were just translated from Greek and attributed to Roman characters shows how, through the school practice, Greek cultural elements were absorbed into the Roman world, and mingled with Roman elements, which eventually helped to the emergence of a single vision of the world.

The many *exempla* on historical subjects chosen by Priscian do not stand alone in the context of sixth century Constantinople and cannot be a mere coincidental product of teaching practice. They are certainly further evidence for that culture and past to which the educated elites anchored their self-definition. There are interesting echoes of some of the historical stages that marked the Roman republic, as exemplified by Priscian, with passages of John Lydus' *De magistratibus*, which was written in the mid-sixth century. John Lydus was a civil servant in the praetorian prefecture from 511 until 551, and his career therefore extended throughout the reigns of Anastasius (491-518), Iustinus (518-527) and Justinian (527-565), as well as that of Priscian. It is also worth remembering that John Lydus went on to teach Latin at the *auditorium* after retiring from service to the state, and that all his erudite works are evidence of the importance of Roman studies in the first half of the sixth century in Constantinople (see p. 40).

Looking at correspondences between Priscian's *exempla* and Lydus' accounts, a particular emphasis is placed on the ideal of freedom which characterised the republican period from the very foundation of the republic with the overthrow of the monarchy in 509 BCE. The *exemplum Bruto defensore liberata est tyranno respublica*[508] refers to Lucius Junius Brutus, who freed Rome from Tarquinius Superbus and was thereafter one of the first consuls. This *exemplum* finds a parallel in a passage of the Greek antiquarian writer in which consulship is regarded as the "mother of Roman freedom" (μήτηρ δὲ ὥσπερ τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἐλευθερίας);[509] the consular dignity "stands in opposition to tyranny; and, when the former prevails, the latter ceases to exist. For that very reason, as soon as Brutus, the champion of discretion and defender of freedom (τῆς ἐλευθερίας ὑπέρμαχος), flashed forth the consular dignity, at once Tarquinius the tyrant was undone".[510]

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[507] Qvint. *Inst*. 12, 2.29-30 *passim* (transl. by Russell 2001, Loeb).
[508] *GL* 3, 221.29.
[509] Lyd. *Mag*. 2, 8.8.
[510] Lyd. *Mag*. 2, 8.8-12 (transl. by Bandy 1983).

With the end of the republic the consulship became merely a ceremonial and representative office; nevertheless, Lydus' praise of the consulship fits into the imperial ideology fostered by Justinian. His accession to the throne brought about a great deal of change which was carried out by means of institutional, juridical, and social reforms aiming to centralise power in the emperor's hands. Justinian's search for legitimacy for his political views started with the creation of a new law code which reaffirmed the role of the emperor as the ultimate judge and legislator (see Louth 2008). The authority of laws was a central idea in the conception of Roman power and was closely connected with the ideal of *libertas* whose origin was referred back to the expulsion of the Tarquins and opposed to tyranny (Pazdernik 2005). Justinian, who took "the consulship unto himself as a rank higher than the imperial office"[511] presented himself as a lawful restorer of the ancient Roman order, first through the systematisation of the law and second through his policy of reconquest of the western territories.

We can draw other parallels between Lydus and Priscian. The *exemplum Sulla uictore perierunt Romani*[512] recalls the same situation expressed by Lydus when talking about the fighting between Marius and Sulla: "after Marius had become a tyrant and had assisted Sulla, the latter arose and became a counter-tyrant; but, while they were fighting against one another, the state of the Romans, because it was the object of dispute, was being mangled by the tyrants".[513]

Another *exemplum* refers to the loss of freedom after Caesar's victory over Pompey: *uictore Pompeii Caesare Romana libertas periit*[514] whose view is also expressed by Lydus when he lists all of the titles Caesar took for himself after Pompey's defeat, "he who had captured even Fortune itself".[515] A last *exemplum* about Caesar's life evokes Julia (*uictoris Pompeii Caesaris filia fuit Iulia*),[516] Caesar's daughter and Pompey's wife, whom Lydus also mentions in the chapter at the beginning of the second book of the *De magistratibus* while sketching the steps that led to the end of the Republic.[517]

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[511] LYD. *Mag.* 2, 8.15-16.
[512] *GL* 3, 222.1.
[513] LYD. *Mag.* 2, 1.4-8; (transl. by BANDY 1983).
[514] *GL* 3, 223.28.
[515] See LYD. *Mag.* 2, 2.
[516] PRISC. 3, 223.25.
[517] See LYD. *Mag.* 2, 1.

Lydus therefore on a number of occasions insists on the concept of *libertas* as opposed to tyranny. At the beginning of the first book of the *De magistratibus* Lydus delineates the differences between lawful kingship (ἔννομος βασίλεια), tyranny (τυραννίς) and emperorship (αὐτοκρατορία); a lawful ruler has respect of the state's laws, does not "shake" (σαλεύειν) them, and does not do anything "outside the laws" (ἔξω τῶν νόμων πράττειν); moreover, a lawful ruler is required to ratify (ἐπισφραγίζειν) whatever the ἄριστοι involved in the government agree on together (τὸ δὲ τοῖς ἀρίστοις τοῦ πολιτεύματος συναρέσκον).[518] On the other hand, the tyrant "will do by his power rashly whatever at all he precisely wishes, not deigning to respect laws, not tolerating to enact them in consultation with a council, but being led on by his own impulses. For, while the law is a king's way, a tyrant's disposition is law".[519]

It has been shown (Maas 1992) that in the *De magistratibus* "Lydus provides the very handbook for an emperor bent on restoration" (p.43); for according to Lydus Justinian was eager (ἐπειγόμενος) to achieve everything useful to the common good and to restore the ancient forms of magistracies.[520] There is therefore praise of Justinian's rule and program of restoration, by making him a champion of "what lawful Roman emperorship entails" (Pazdernik 2005, p. 197). Justinian "did not only emulate Trajan in his military exploits, but he surpassed Augustus himself in his piety toward God and moderateness of manners, Titus in his nobleness, and Marcus in his sagacity".[521] By listing in this way Justinian's virtues (as if they were part of *exempla ficta*) Lydus clearly assigns to the emperor a place among the desirable rulers of the first two centuries of the Empire, the so-called *principes* (from Augustus until Marcus Aurelius), and distinguishes his dominion from the despotic rule of emperors such as Diocletian, who was instead the first to turn to the custom of king-tyrants.[522] It seems therefore that Lydus' intention was not only to describe Justinian according to the imperial propaganda itself, but also to seek from the emperor recognition of the urban elite in the government of the State in the name of a shared Roman past and culture.

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[518] See LYD. *Mag*. 1, 3.
[519] See LYD. *Mag*. 1, 3.20-23; (transl. by BANDY 1983).
[520] Cf. LYD. *Mag*. 2, 28.
[521] LYD. *Mag*. 2, 28 (transl. by BANDY 1983).
[522] See LYD. *Mag*. 1, 4: πρῶτος [...] ἐπὶ τὸ βασιλικὸν [...] ἐπὶ τὸ τυραννικὸν ἔτρεψεν. For an analysis of imperial self-presentation under Justinian, and of John Lydus' ambivalence about Justinian' rule see PAZDERNIK (2005).

Justinian's idea of empire was not only based on Roman past but also on the new Christian identity of the State, with the Christian God being ultimately the origin of imperial power;[523] as shown by Maas (1992, chapter 3) by the will of Justinian the Roman past underwent a process of ideological transformation that led to a past free from pagan associations. In this respect it should be noted that Justinian launched three major persecutions against pagans, and many of the victims were aristocrats and civil servants (see Maas 1992, chapter 5); "Justinian's intertwined goals of eliminating wrong belief and removing his political opponents frequently merged under the aegis of anti-pagan persecution, and this gave allegiance to the classical past a new, political dimension" (p. 68).

Maas (1992) also argues that the same classical past was owned in Constantinople in two different ways by the emperor and the urban elite trained in the classics, "both concerned with self-definition, the latter with survival as well" (p. 43). While the emperor pursued a Christianisation of the State at all levels, and considered paganism a threat to the Christian establishment, the educated elite perceived itself as the guardian of classical culture and therefore opposed to Justinian's aggressive policies (see Maas 1992, p. 116). John Lydus being an antiquarian could discuss more freely the classical past in his works, probably protected by the harmlessness of his field of study. The presence of bits of classical past in a grammatical treatise such as the one composed by Priscian is again an expression of the elite's belonging and education.

Net of the ideological and political struggle between the elites and the emperor, the Roman past accounted for the status of Constantinople itself too. Priscian taught a mostly Greek-speaking audience but the historical and political framework to which he refers is Roman, as if he led his students back to the foundations of the Roman State, and provided them with a store of characters and events serving to strengthen their social identity against the challenges and changes experienced in Constantinople. The educated elites of the capital took on the task of strengthening the correspondence between Constantinople and the Graeco-Roman past; it was a matter of the identity of the city too, which began with the foundation of the city in 330 CE. Constantine for example erected a temple to the Fortune of Rome in the agora of ancient Byzantium, and adorned his new capital with statues gathered from the principal cities of the Greek

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[523] Cf. p. 46 of this thesis.

East (see Mango 1963); they were mostly of Greek figures both mythical and historical, but Roman insignia were also present in the city. In the baths of Zeuxippus for example were assembled, according to the description that the poet Christodorus of Coptos made of them in the sixth century, eighty statues among which there were only a few of Roman subjects, namely Caesar, Pompey, Vergil and Apuleius (see Croke 2008 and Mango 1963).

We may assume that in a mostly Greek cultural framework Roman references were pursued by members of the elite depending on what message they wanted to send to their contemporaries, since a Roman reference in a Greek context conveys a certain amount of idiosyncrasy. In this respect it is interesting to see how the emperor Anastasius was addressed differently by Priscian and Procopius of Gaza in the panegyrics they composed for him. While Procopius praised the emperor by placing him above Philip of Macedon and Alexander the Great, Priscian drew a parallel between Anastasius and Pompey the Great because of the alleged descent of the emperor from the Roman general (Croke 2008). This political propaganda that linked Pompey and Anastasius found a form of expression also in the verses written by Christodorus pertaining to the statue of Pompey in the baths of Zeuxippus; Pompey is addressed as "he who generated the noble race of the Emperor Anastasius."[524]

In the sixth century within the milieu of the city everyone could still feel part of a well-defined Graeco-Roman cultural framework, while the educated elite gave new life to the past by re-contextualising it and adapting from time to time what was more suitable and effective to a Greek or Latin-speaking audience. With the accession to the throne of Justinian a further ideological use of the past threatened the non-Christian classical tradition which members of the elite such as Priscian and John Lydus were still able and allowed to transmit clear of references to Christian religion.

5.4 *Exempla ficta*: three case studies

In this last section of the chapter I am going to consider three case studies with the aim to show that, although *exempla* reflect and describe the rules of standard Latin, they may show other kinds of linguistic influence. In particular, the first case study looks at some *exempla* drawn from the *Priscianus maior*, which relate to the possible

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[524] *Anth. Gr.* 2, 403-4. For an interesting analysis of the ideological links between Anastasius and Pompey, and more generally of Pompeian memorials in the East, see CROKE (2008).

loss of knowledge of vowel length, characteristic of late antiquity. The second case looks at a syntactic feature which was also typical of colloquial speech, while the third case study analyses some Greek quotations of the Atticistic lexicon in which an optative was probably used by Priscian instead of a subjunctive.

This is the case study drawn from the *Priscianus maior*.[525] On three occasions Priscian lists the feminine nouns *lībra* ("a balance") and *fībra* ("a fibre") as respectively derived from the masculine nouns *lĭber* ("a book") and *fĭber* ("a beaver"); according to Priscian *lībra* and *fībra* are worth of note because they show indeed derivation from the masculine *lĭber* and *fĭber*, but only in respect of the form of the terms, not in respect of their meaning. Using ancient terminology, they may be called *quasi mobilia* ("as if they changed [from masculine to feminine]"), because the derivation from the masculine forms is only apparent.[526] What is interesting is the fact that Priscian clearly did not consider the different vowel length of initial syllables. Priscian could have been unable to distinguish clearly the short and long vowels of *lĭber / lībra* and *fĭber / fībra*. Grammarians had mastery of Latin metres but analysing single words out of their metrical and syntactic context could have been challenging even for a grammarian, if we consider the influence of spoken Latin. We know from the grammarian Consentius that African speakers used to lengthen short stressed vowels in open syllables and say for example *pīper* for *pĭper*, and Augustine gives us a further evidence in the *De doctrina Christiana* of the fact that Africans could not distinguish between long and short vowels (see Maltby 2012, p. 731). This phenomenon may be the same that led Priscian to his interpretation of these nouns. I do not want to engage here with the question of Priscian's origin (discussed in the introduction p. 8), but if we accept the *communis opinio* that Priscian originated from Caesarea in Mauretania, this linguistic evidence could also be a further indication, although meagre, of the western birth of Priscian.

A second case study concerns the exposition of substantival infinitives. Priscian gives these examples: *bonum est legere*; *utile est currere*; *aptum est scribere*; *optimum est philosophari*. A parallel is drawn by Priscian with Greek, in which the use of the infinitive with an article is common;[527] this could be therefore labelled as a syntactic influence of Greek, but Priscian does not explicitly use expressions such as *more*

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[525] Cf. *GL* 2, 142.6-8; 232.8-13; 418.9-10.
[526] Cf. *GL* 3, 142.6-8.
[527] *GL* 3, 226.22: *itaque apud Graecos etiam articulis adiungitur infinitum more nominum.*

Graeco to describe this use, which seems surprising given the efforts he has made throughout his *Ars* to seek Greek usages in Latin. Other grammarians before him spoke of Greek figures instead; Servius and Pompeius (fifth century CE) in their respective commentaries of Donatus' *Ars* call the use of substantival infinitive *Graeca elocutio*, and *Graeca figura*.[528] Pompeius stresses that *da mihi bibere* is openly Greek, a Greek construction, not Latin[529] (cf. Ferri & Probert 2010, p. 30). It is interesting to note that the same use of the infinitive was considered by Quintilian merely a figure of speech, without reference to Greek influence. [530] Priscian is neutral with regard to the substantival infinitive; he mentions its use in both Greek and Latin. This may be evidence of the fact that a use which was in the past felt as needing some kind of justification, because it was perceived as peculiar, although acceptable, by the time of Priscian was felt as the norm, probably because it had spread in colloquial speech.[531]

A third case study concerns a series of Greek quotations which are part of the final Atticistic lexicon.[532] The analysis of Greek forms in quotations needs particular attention, because the manuscript tradition is entirely western and often corrupt due to the fact that Greek was hardly known in the West during the Middle Ages. In considering therefore that the status of Priscian's manuscript tradition makes it difficult sometimes to understand fully what the grammarian read in his source or what he meant, it is however possible to make a few remarks about some Greek verbal forms quoted by Priscian as part of the Atticistic lexicon, which show the use of optatives for subjunctives in conditional clauses. According to Priscian the use of the optative is a *mos frequentissimus* among the *Attici*.[533]

1- *Plato in Gorgia:* ὥστ᾽ **εἴ** μοι καὶ τὴν ἡμέραν ὅλην **ἐθέλοιτε** διαλέγεσθαι, χαριεῖσθαι.[534]

The text of Plato via direct transmission reads: ὥστ᾽ ἔμοιγε, **κἂν** τὴν ἡμέραν ὅλην **ἐθέλητε** διαλέγεσθαι, χαριεῖσθε[535] ("so, for my part, I shall count it a favour even if you choose to continue it all day long" transl. by Lamb). The text

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[528] See *GL* 4, 411.19-25, and *GL* 5, 213.12-20.
[529] *GL* 5, 213.13-15: *quotiens ita uolueris facere, Graece loqueris aperte,* da mihi bibere, δός μοι πιεῖν. *et erit Graeca elocutio, Latina non est*.
[530] Cf. QVINT. *Inst.* 9.3.9.
[531] For an interpretation of the use of substantival infinitive as a mark of colloquialism, see CHAHOUD (2010, p. 62).
[532] A new edition of the text containing the Atticistic lexicon is ROSELLINI (2015).
[533] See *GL* 3, 242.10.
[534] *GL* 3, 289.11-12.
[535] PLAT. *Gorg.* 458d.

reported by Priscian presents the future infinitive χαριεῖσθαι instead of the future indicative χαριεῖσθε, which may be explained by the reduction of the diphthong -αι to the sound /e/ in late spoken Greek, and the substitution of the conditional clause ἐάν + subjunctive (ἐθέλητε) found in Plato, which locates a relatively possible event in a future time, with εἴ + optative (ἐθέλοιτε). Now, in Classical Greek a conditional clause formed by εἴ + optative expressed what *would be* the result if the condition *should be* fulfilled; there was therefore a slightly different attitude of the speaker towards the probability of fulfilment of the event in the future, and as Horrocks (2017) explains, the distinction between the two types of future-referring conditional clauses began to blur due to a "functional overlap" (p. 225). Also, in this case the pronunciation of ἐθέλητε and ἐθέλοιτε was the same in spoken Greek and may have contributed to the change. It should also be remembered that optatives were no longer used in the koine. Horrocks (2017) shows that in Medieval Greek composed by the learned elite, the redeployment of traditional forms that were by then out of use, such as optatives, must be seen as variants of the forms that were still used, and was therefore a product of Atticistic practice (p. 233-241). The substitution of moods in Priscian's text may be an early evidence of the same phenomenon described by Horrocks (2017). Priscian (or his Greek source) used an optative as a marker of Atticism since it was more distinctive than a normal subjunctive which was used in common Greek. Other cases present the same substitution.

2- Homerus: **αἴ** κέν μοι **δώῃ** Ζεὺς αἰγίοχος καὶ Ἀθήνη[536] ("if Zeus who bears the aegis and Athene grant me...")

The text of Homer reads δώῃ,[537] epic form of the aorist subjunctive, instead of the *lectio* δῴη accepted by Hertz which may be interpreted as an optative singular for δοίη,[538] and is found in this form as an independent optative in the New Testament (as for example at *Romans* 15.5, and *2 Thessalonians* 3.16). The presence of an optative in an αἴ κεν (viz. εἰ ἄν) protasis is not observed in Classical Greek where a subjunctive instead is required. Priscian quotes this Homeric verse together with the passage seen above from Plato's *Gorgias*, and another verse from the *Odyssey* (13, 389) which contains an optative preceded

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[536] *GL* 3, 289.14.
[537] Hom. *Il.* 8, 287.
[538] Rosellini (2015) restores the subjunctive δώῃ.

by αἴ κέ, and is followed by the apodosis also with κέ and the optative.[539] In this last case we deal with an early Greek use still preserved in Homeric usage according to which future conditions had two perfectly analogous forms, one with two subjunctives and one with two optatives.[540] Priscian composed this entry of his lexicon by pairing εἰ and ἐάν + optative with *si* + optative or subjunctive; the same three quotations with optatives were already used by Priscian earlier in the eighteenth book (*GL* 3, 266. 5-8) where once again they were useful to him to explain the use of εἰ + optative, which suggests that Priscian read an optative in all three passages. From a different perspective only a protasis of the type εἰ + optative corresponds to the Latin *si* + subjunctive, whereas ἐάν + subjunctive corresponds to *si* + future indicative.[541] Priscian's interest in the former is evidenced also by the direct translation of the clause εἴ... ἐθέλοιτε διαλέγεσθαι with *si uelitis loqui*.[542]

There is another Greek quotation from Xenophon which may contain, according to Priscian's editors, either a future indicative (εἰ μή γε φανεῖς)[543] or an optative (εἰ μή γε φανείης)[544] whereas Xenophon's direct tradition shows an aorist subjunctive (ἂν μή γε φανῇς).[545] Priscian may have read the future directly in his source (Spangenberg Yanes 2017, p. 102), or interpreted the subjunctive in a different way because of the iotacism, or because Priscian's Atticistic practice (or his source's) restored a literary optative where a subjunctive was correct.

The three case studies above relate to different linguistic issues, the blurring of the distinction between long and short vowels, the Greek influence on a Latin syntactic usage and the hypercorrection of conditional clauses. All three though can be seen as situations in which the forms of standard language were influenced by non-standard forms.

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[539] **αἴ κέ** μοι ὣς μεμαυῖα **παρασταίης**, γλαυκῶπι, / καί **κε** τριηκοσίοισιν ἐγὼν ἄνδρεσσι **μαχοίμην** ("if you were to stand by my side... I would fight").
[540] See Goodwin's syntax (para. 401).
[541] See Goodwin (para. 392).
[542] *GL* 3, 266.5.
[543] See Rosellini (2015).
[544] *GL* 3, 294.8-9 and 303.3-4 (by Hertz).
[545] Xenoph. *Oec*. 18.1.

5.5 Conclusions

The use of made-up examples in Priscian's work is a fruitful field of enquiry because it gives further insight into Priscian's project of merging Greek and Latin cultural traditions.

Priscian built his work on previous grammatical and rhetorical teachings. The extensive use of *exempla ficta*, together with quotations, as illustrative of standard language is a standout feature of Priscian's *Ars*, and especially of the *De constructione*, because invented examples are particularly suitable to describe the syntax of Latin. The language at issue was the standard Latin, but we have shown that even Priscian could slip sometimes owing to the influence of other varieties of the *continuum*.

In considering the pedagogical context of the *exempla*, they relate both to the practice of listing *idiomata*, because they are examples of the rules captured in the *idiomata*, and to the rhetorical instruction that practised the declination of *chriae*.

While many *exempla* are found in the previous grammatical tradition and are evidence of the stratification of ancient scholarship on grammar, as those examples that Priscian drew from Apollonius, there are sets of *exempla* that refer to the reinterpretation of rhetorical exercises or recall axioms used in philosophical discussions of language.

We have also seen that these simple constructions do not convey only grammatical rules. They convey also cultural significance, since they transmit a body of knowledge which belong to the classical past of Greece and Rome. This interpretation of *exempla ficta* looks at the value that ancient education gave to gnomic texts, and in particular at the importance Romans gave to the figures and deeds of their past. Some of Priscian's examples relate to this tradition and show a series of historic facts recorded and transmitted by these grammatical constructions. Priscian must have both resorted to a shared knowledge and aimed at consolidating it among the elites of Constantinople. This is therefore further evidence of the importance of Roman studies in the first half of the sixth century, as demonstrated also by the works of John Lydus.

We have also seen that the cultural framework of these *exempla* is free from Christian allusions. In fact, they refer to values and ideas that relate to the Republican period, which became for Priscian a means to express shared beliefs of the urban elite, in the same way as John Lydus spoke of Roman magistracies in his work. To convey these beliefs became a source of concern for members of the elite, a concern which arose from the changing imperial policies during the age of Justinian, directed at

creating a Roman Christian Empire where pagan allusions and beliefs were no longer accepted, while Constantinopolitan elites identified with this pagan past.

The mixture of Greek and Roman elements in teaching practice helped the formation and preservation of a single classical horizon within which the status of elites was recognised, and through which elites could manage change and outcomes brought about by Christian culture.

CONCLUSIONS

The core of the argument I have been pursuing in this thesis is that the grammatical thought of a society is likely to reveal information about the beliefs, attitudes and identity of the members of that society, as well as to provide an insight into school practice and the educational system.

I hope to have offered a number of interesting insights on the issues that I set out to address in detail at the beginning of my dissertation, particularly to assess to what extent Priscian's grammatical work, and especially the *De constructione*, can be used to reconstruct the cultural and linguistic background of sixth-century Constantinople, by looking in particular at the composition of the audience of the *Ars* and its self-perception, to assess to what extent the Greek grammatical language underlying the *Ars* influenced the way in which Latin was perceived by and explained to this audience, and finally to evaluate the function of quotations and *exempla ficta* in transmitting both grammatical and cultural knowledge so as to shed further light on the teaching of Latin in the East.

Indeed, Priscian's work has proved to be a valuable source of information for assessing the culture of the eastern elite between fifth and sixth century which modern scholarship often explains in terms of continuity and change with the classical past (cf. Cameron 1981, 2009, 2016; Mango 1981; Mitchell & Greatrex 2000). In modern studies literary figures of late antiquity reveal through their careers and works where they stood in relation to the classical past and to the new Christian culture (cf. for example Cameron 1965; Cameron, Av. & Al. 1966, 1970 Maas 1992). Regarding the aim to consider grammatical works as being useful to reveal more than only grammatical knowledge, I provided some appreciation of Priscian's technographic work as a depository of eastern cultural issues. Reasonably, this work adds to our understanding of the elite culture of late antiquity and complements well the findings of students of the political and religious issues of sixth-century Constantinople.

Priscian's *Ars* reflected the complex linguistic and cultural background of the eastern capital in late antiquity, which is seen in Priscian's attempt to merge Greek scholarship into the Latin tradition and is revealed by the range of sources Priscian used, his teaching method and the ideological frame of reference of his linguistic instruction. The composition of the most comprehensive work of Latin grammar

cannot be regarded as merely an exceptional case in the context of Constantinople, but the natural outcome of a seamless cultural relationship between Greece and Rome.

My study of Priscian's work puts in evidence the degree of closeness between Greek and Latin grammatical and linguistic tradition and explains it in terms of cultural integration. Priscian did not produce a mere work of grammar; in describing and codifying the grammar of a language he synthesised his vision of the world. It is the *De constructione*, with its focus on syntax, which we are able to interpret as mirroring cultural integration, or better, cultural syntax.

The importance of a knowledge of both languages in the eastern part of the Roman empire related to the advantages of this competence for anyone wanting to increase their chances of success in the imperial civil and military entourage. In this respect, works such as Rochette (1997) and Millar (2006) inform of the diffusion and use of Latin and Greek in the eastern part of the empire. My contribution added to these studies of the late empire an original philological reading of Priscian's work and offered itself as a bridge between studies of grammar and cultural history. Throughout late antiquity, the necessity in the East to administer a state where the vast majority of people spoke Greek and to form a class of civil servants and military officials led to the emergence of a Graeco-Roman elite that came to perceive itself as an embodiment of Greek and Roman cultural and linguistic elements. Building on the many current studies of ancient education my work stressed the idiosyncratic function of Latin learning in a mostly Greek context. To learn Latin was not only a skill functional to the State machine but carried also a strong identitary element for part of the elite. The perpetuation of a high standard literary language conveyed by quotations and *exempla ficta* answered to the need of elites to uphold their cultural heritage.

In the first chapter I looked at the Graeco-Roman cultural narrative which underlies Priscian's work as a whole by focusing specifically on the rhetoric of the preface to the *Ars*. The preface, of which I provided an English translation (which was until now unavailable), encompasses many motifs which constitute the background of Priscian's work, and conveys not only his programmatic point of view, but also the ancient narrative of the primacy of Greece in any kind of study and the ability of Rome to emulate the Greek model. He also made use of the preface as a means of promoting himself as the *grammaticus* of Constantinople. Indeed, Priscian stands out as an authoritative exponent of the Graeco-Roman culture of the time because of the outcome of his teaching efforts and his role at the State *auditorium*.

The way in which Priscian presents and addresses the dedicatee of the *Ars*, the *consul ac patricius* Julian, fits into the self-representation of members of elite in late antiquity, which was built on a twofold education in Greek and Latin.

In Priscian's view Julian was renowned and recognisable within his community precisely and only because, by knowing both Greek and Latin, he embodied the ideal of the connoisseur of the essentials of classical culture with which the elite identified itself. In this regard, Priscian provided members of the elite with a valuable work of reference which conveyed the rules and structures of standard Latin. This was not the everyday language of the elite but related to the canonical authors of Latin literature and was illustrated in the *Ars* by literary quotations and invented examples in the tradition of Latin *artes*. His aim was therefore not to teach his audience how to communicate in everyday life, but how to master and preserve the knowledge of the standard language. In this respect, my study is an original contribution to a better understanding of the cultural function of linguistic constructs at the high end of the Latin linguistic *continuum* of late antiquity.

The everyday language of elites in Constantinople must have consisted in the use of different varieties of the Greek and Latin linguistic *continua*, but is unlikely to have been the standard described by Priscian's *Ars* or Dionysius' Τέχνη; the standard, however, told the elites who they were. The linguistic context of Constantinople was so diverse that a work on classical standard Latin stands out for its ideological impact on Priscian's audiences. The study of Latin, alongside Greek, was sponsored by the State, and reflected the way the elite conceptualised itself. However, this Latin material would not completely make sense without considering the Greek linguistic and grammatical frame of reference which constitutes the backbone of Priscian's work.

It would not be out of place to echo, *mutatis mutandis*, for late eastern society what Whitmarsh (2001) says about the construction of a cultural identity in the Second Sophistic period: "Identity was not *reflected by*, but *constructed through* language (p. 273)". The Constantinopolitan elite society addressed by Priscian seemed to coagulate around a specific cultural marker, namely knowledge of the two prestigious tongues of the empire. This is a striking difference in comparison with the tendency of the Greek elites between the first and third centuries CE, who promoted the mastery of Attic Greek as a specificity of their status and education. As shown by Whitmarsh (2005) "the ability to Atticise was a central and exclusive marker of elite identity (p.

43)", and "Attic Greek (as opposed to the demotic Greek spoken by the masses) was the *lingua franca* of the educated elites, the common cultural store which bound them together and excluded the lower class" (Whitmarsh 2001, p. 272).

The relationship with Roman domination played an essential role in the display of the Greek culture typical of the authors of the Second Sophistic. The proud manifestation of Greek culture by eastern elites was useful to them in obtaining political and social recognition from the Romans (Whitmarsh 2005, pp. 10-13), as well in placing themselves as "other" beside the Romans. In the sixth century, however, the ideal of the educated man overcomes the distinction between Greek and Latin culture as two separate worlds. This must be evaluated as an important cultural change in the self-definition of the elites in the east, in comparison with the previous centuries, when the defence of Greekness was at stake. In this study I have shown that Priscian's grammatical instruction reflected this new stage of cultural engagement between Greece and Rome. Priscian's target community was cultivated in both Greek and Latin; this was the new crucial component of late eastern elites' παιδεία.

To access the basics of a Graeco-Roman education was the main objective of the teaching practice in the East. From the fourth century onwards, we witness the development of grammatical discipline and the creation of bilingual teaching tools. Priscian's *De constructione* shows the extent of Priscian's engagement with Greek scholarship and with a Greek audience.

In the second chapter, the *De constructione* was taken into consideration, which, as a result of its design and structure, allowed us to analyse in depth the particular relationship between Priscian and his Greek model. Contributions of modern scholars have often pointed out Priscian's bilingual culture and his effort to merge Greek and Latin (for example cf. Biville 2008, 2009; Rochette 1997), or have examined the formal composition of the text and its sources (cf. Rosellini 2011, 2015), or have stressed the importance of Apollonius and Priscian in the history of western linguistics (cf. Law 1997, 2003; Taylor 1993). My reading of Priscian's text has shed further light on the interaction between the two grammarians and the two texts. Although the *De constructione* was heavily influenced by the Greek text, Priscian was able to replace Apollonius as author of the work by the acquisition not only of his arguments but also of his linguistic structures. This is an enhancement of the study of Priscian's use of Apollonius' work as currently practised. In fact, it offers a different approach; it does not only look for linguistic similarities and differences between the

two authors, but also inquires into the ideological reasons of Priscian's adaptation. My analysis is not and cannot be exhaustive, but it is offered as a first starting contribution for further observations on the idiosyncrasies of the *De constructione*.

We were able to understand what enabled Priscian to transfer a syntax of Greek into Latin and to what extent his approach to Latin grammar was shaped by his source text. The underlying Greek metalanguage and the transfer into Latin of the theoretical frame of Apollonius' work through the translation of definitions and arguments of Greek grammar are inherent reasons why Priscian understood Latin as deeply dependent on Greek. This theoretical and metalinguistic Greek substratum consciously and unconsciously influenced Priscian's understanding of language and was responsible for the idea of a unique Graeco-Roman grammar.

Priscian's *De constructione* is pervaded by the constant pairing of Greek and Latin constructions. In order to explain this feature of Priscian's work, in the third chapter we looked at the pedagogical framework of late antiquity and at the teaching of Latin in the East. The existence of bilingual teaching in the East led to the formation of a combined Graeco-Roman stock of tools which insisted on similarities and differences between Greek and Latin, and on the idea of a *Graecus mos* as a means to explain Latin through Greek.

In particular, I have shown that Latin studies on syntax developed in the East from the school practice of describing Latin usages as opposed to Greek from the fourth century onwards, the so-called *idiomata*. It was the need to teach Latin to a mostly Greek speaking audience that led to the emergence of tools that illustrated similarities and differences between the two languages and allowed Latin grammarians to reflect on the structures of Latin.

After Varro's first attempt in the first century BCE, Latin syntactic studies developed in a bilingual setting as a differentiation from Greek. Latin grammatical science benefitted from the possibility of using Greek as a term of comparison. Also, since it lacked an independent tradition, Latin was anchored to the necessity of having Greek as an underlying model of language, which eventually would lead it to an even more close cognitive dependence on and amalgamation with Greek.

I hope to have sufficiently stressed the importance of this ancient approach to language teaching in the development of the ancient theories of language contact and have contributed to ancient education studies with an original interpretation of these teaching materials. In my study, *idiomata* receive appropriate recognition as indicators

of the effort of teachers to explain syntactic structures, whose need became necessary only when Latin started to be taught as a second language. I aimed to shed further light on the formation of bilingual tools for Latin learning in the East; my analysis of *idiomata* is a contribution to this end. Following on from this, I was able to offer an evaluation of the extent to which Priscian's syntactic work contained material drawn from such lists of *idiomata*, providing an understanding of Priscian's teaching method and sources that adds to the latest scholarly research.

In the *De constructione* Priscian made use of the eastern practice of listing *idiomata*. It is reflected in the form of words with which he leads up to his syntactic examples, namely *Graeci dicunt… nos uero*. Although Priscian's work reflects this feature of eastern schools, he did not create a list of Latin uses as opposed to the Greek, but wanted to yoke the two tongues together and therefore showed a different approach in relation to the linguistic uses he collected. Even the Atticistic lexicon that constitutes the last part of the *Ars* seems to have been collected in order to show to what extent Latin idioms followed a *Graecus mos*.

The eastern grammatical discipline developed further the linguistic theory of the Greek origin of Latin which had already appeared in the first century BCE and related to an ideological reconstruction of the Roman past which made the Romans themselves of (partly) Greek origin. Priscian seems to have embraced this theory without giving any historical justification of the similarities between Greek and Latin; by the fifth century it was an established theory among scholars, as also evidenced by Macrobius' claims. In my discussion I have underlined that while the theories that developed in the republican period pointed to a dependence of Latin on Greek, Macrobius and Priscian show an underlying narrative of sameness between Greek and Latin. In late antiquity Greek and Latin constituted in the eyes of elite members a pair distinguished from other languages. I have interpreted knowledge of grammar of this pair as an element with which to build cultural integration.

Centuries of political and cultural contacts between Greeks and Romans led to linguistic theories that reflected the cultural horizons of the elites. I have drawn attention to the role of eastern schools in creating the cultural conditions for the gradual integration of Greek and Roman elites. In addition to answering to the practical needs of elite, school was the place where different aspects of Greek and Roman culture found cohabitation and mutual recognition. Priscian's grammatical perspective made Greeks and Romans speak the same ("grammatical") language and

resolved the divide between the two. To draw from the indications that come from a grammatical work has proved therefore to be a fruitful exercise in the attempt to reconstruct the cultural background of sixth-century Constantinople.

In this regard, my study drew attention to the way in which Priscian's text creates and addresses its audience(s). We were able to appreciate the particular care that Priscian shows when explaining Latin grammar rules to his direct audience; from the nature of his language descriptions it seems that he gave special consideration to an audience whose first language was not Latin. In addition, by referring to *Graeci* (*illi*) and *Romani* (*nos*), Priscian's text creates a broader audience that goes beyond the restricted horizons of sixth century Constantinople and refers in cultural terms to the two components of ancient civilisation. While *Graeci* and *Romani* identify the two components that traditionally formed the culture of the Roman State, the sixth-century representatives of this culture, who Priscian specifically addressed, shared a combined linguistic experience.

In the fourth and fifth chapters I looked particularly at the two kinds of construction that Priscian used to illustrate the standard language, namely literary quotations and *exempla ficta*, and we were able to identify the elements of continuity with the rhetorical training which characterised ancient education. The study of the *exampla ficta* has proved to be particularly useful in revealing the world of the elites.

Priscian's linguistic analysis and supporting evidence reveal the stratified ancient scholarship on grammar, which was considered merely the foundation of an elite education. The ancient focus on rhetorical training and the influence of rhetorical tools on grammatical teaching is revealed in the structure of the *Ars*, and of the *De constructione* in particular.

The large number of literary quotations included by Priscian in his work illustrates the traditional canon of authors, who were bearers of correctness and a guarantee of standard Latin. The sets of *exempla ficta* resemble the preliminary exercises to rhetoric and are rooted in the beginnings of Greek syntactic studies which originated in philosophical discussions on logic. This is an important finding of the present study that adds to our knowledge of ancient teaching practices.

In late antiquity "the perpetuation of the Latin literary heritage becomes part of a wider discourse concerning the Roman past" (Chahoud 2007, p. 69); the ancient educational system, which developed from the Hellenistic scholarship, was designed in the first place to preserve the models that students had to read and imitate because

of the importance given to rhetorical teaching in the formation of elites. Studying the *usus auctorum* had first of all the practical purpose of explaining and supporting grammar, but also helped the amalgamation of the Greek and Latin literary traditions.

In Priscian's *De constructione*, while it is possible to see the connections between the domains of grammar and rhetoric as they were established in the first century CE, it is also possible to follow the developments of grammatical discipline which from the fourth century became more focused on written language.

Building on our understanding of the antecedent grammatical tradition, my study points out that Priscian's innovative work on syntax witnesses the increased attention to written language and its structures. The *usus auctorum* is a central criterion of Priscian's work. His analysis revolves around the words of the Roman writers of the past, and he therefore modifies the framework of his main source, Apollonius Dyscolus, who paid attention also to the everyday usage of Greek elites. The range of authors quoted by Priscian in his *Ars* includes writers from all the periods into which we divide Latin literature, but the *De constructione* shows a more select group of younger writers. This selection was made in the wake of earlier discussions about literary criticism and imitation; the criteria set out by rhetoricians in the first century CE were preserved and transmitted by grammatical works. This adds to our knowledge of ancient teaching practices too, in particular of the extent to which ancient literary theories still influenced the composition of grammar tools in the sixth century.

As the *usus auctorum* shows, Priscian had a perception of linguistic change with regard to the phonology and morphology of Latin; syntactic variation is explained sometimes in terms of Greek influence over Latin, but Priscian was not interested in listing mistakes and incorrect arrangements drawn from everyday communication, and we therefore cannot infer much about syntactic changes. The everyday usage of Roman elites is passed over in silence, which implies that Priscian either thought that the language described in his *Ars* was the everyday usage of Roman elites, or that he recognised a separation between the *grammatica*, as a secondary kind of language, and the vernacular variety of the elites. In diglossic societies these two views (mutually exclusive to the modern linguist) are not always clearly distinguished.

Grammarians played an essential part in shaping the linguistic experience of the elites; both the Latin of the *Ars* and that described by it will have been perceived as models by them. The lists of quotations, idioms and *exempla* provided a repository of learned constructions which could be used in everyday written and spoken

communication, when needs arose; the ability to shape instances of communication through these constructions was an attribute of the elite, whose language must have appeared a patchwork of Graeco-Roman elements embellished by learned constructions. On the other hand, we have seen that the Greek environment of Constantinople may have influenced the perception that elements of Latin grammar resembled Greek; when eastern grammarians, and especially Priscian, talked of the newest usages following a *Graecus mos*, they may have associated the Graecisms of their everyday language with the grammar they described.

I have claimed that Priscian's understanding of language reflected the Graeco-Roman identity of the eastern elite. This cultural identity was indeed conveyed by the models of language presented in the *De constructione*. Finding literary parallels between Greek and Latin works influenced and at the same time formed the understanding of the grammar of such parallels and eventually of the idea itself of language, with consequent effects on elite notions of identity.

If literary quotations formed an extended canon of classical authors, the *exempla ficta* also served to convey elements of cultural knowledge. The range of historical figures and subjects of the *exempla* portrays the background knowledge of the elite, which sees confirmation also in other writers of the period, like John Lydus. Priscian's quotations and *exempla* contained therefore the basics of a model elite education: standard language and an historical frame of reference which looked to the classical past.

In considering the political, linguistic, and religious changes of sixth century Constantinople, Priscian's work served those who still felt their connection with the Roman and pagan past, who at that time formed part of the Constantinopolitan elite. Priscian and his target readership wanted and sought to meet all of the cultural requirements for being members of a particular and prestigious cultural framework which began to be challenged by new religious policies, not to mention the fact that from a political point of view east and west had taken separate paths from the beginning of the fifth century. To stress the unity of Greek and Latin served to reiterate the cultural unity of the Roman empire. In this way we can claim that Priscian's work aimed at shaping the identity of Constantinopolitan elites.

Elite members considered their culture, based on both Roman and Greek heritage, as their pass to power, and probably the only means for conserving and perpetuating the social and political status they had in the East. They were

representatives of a tradition which had held power until that time and was then put in danger by cultural and political changes. At the beginning of the sixth century the elements of continuity with the Roman past were still substantial among the elites.

In the words of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu: "One cannot save the value of a competence unless one saves the market, in other words, the whole set of political and social conditions of production of the producers/consumers". [546] Priscian's attempt to prolong Roman studies among the elites so as to defend "the market" failed in the generation which followed him, at least in part due to the emerging Christian Zeitgeist of Greek Constantinople.

This study could be the base for a new research project and could be taken further by focusing more on the wider Graeco-Roman literary context of Constantinople between the fifth and sixth century. It would be useful to look at contemporary productions in Greek and Latin, including chronicles, poetry, legal studies, and school texts, and to search for linguistic elements that may be related to the language of the *Ars*. A closer look should also be taken at the political events from the end of the fifth century until the end of the sixth, with the aim of describing the dynamics within the Graeco-Roman elites in terms of competition and integration. Did Priscian's programme of cultural and linguistic amalgamation fail, since the use of Latin was soon abandoned even in the administration of the State? What was the role of the Greek ecclesiastical establishment, and the impact of religious debates between Rome and the East on the status of Latin studies?

Another field of enquiry that deserves attention is the impact of grammatical language on theological language. Late antiquity was overflowing with discussions about the dogmas of faith, and with defining correct and heretical beliefs. Religious issues were an important aspect of Constantinopolitan society which in this thesis I have discussed only briefly. Among many things, theologians argued about the nature of Christ and the persons of the Trinity. Greek and Roman theologians must have found obvious difficulties in reaching a point of contact when words were hardly transferable between the two languages. Grammatical and theological discussions share terms such as λόγος, οὐσία, φύσις, πρόσωπον, *uerbum*, *substantia*, *natura*, *persona*; the understanding of language structures must have had a part in defining theological concepts. Defining a dogma, for example, could be compared to imposing

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[546] BOURDIEU (1991, p. 57).

a name upon a substance, as ancient grammarians thought about formation of nouns. When theologians undertook the task of defining the substance "Christ", the underlying Greek grammatical thought must have influenced their understanding; how many substances are there in Christ when he is defined both as a God and a human being? The number of controversies about this is evidence of the fact that it was not easy to expand the common understanding of a noun. The same may be said of the concept of Trinity with the coexistence of three persons in one substance. As the elite language was shaped by the language of grammarians, in the same way theological disquisitions may have been influenced by grammatical definitions and by the underlying Greek understanding of language.

In this thesis, I have provided a detailed discussion of Latin syntactic studies in the East, and in doing so have acquired many insights into the Graeco-Roman culture of that time. The *De constructione* is a scholarly work which, beyond its grammatical teachings, conserves and reveals traces of the spirit of the city of Constantinople of the sixth century. In my investigations into the Latin teaching tradition of this society, I have discussed the emergence of the bilingual teaching practice and the ways in which this teaching was carried out by Priscian. I have considered the status of the standard written language, and its importance for the self-perception of the elite, and I have discussed the complex interaction between Greek and Latin cultural traditions and how these were connected to, shaped and preserved by the teaching tradition. In this way, I have been able to provide an evaluation of Priscian's technographic work as a depository of eastern cultural issues and concerns, and especially as mirroring the structures of a Graeco-Roman world.

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