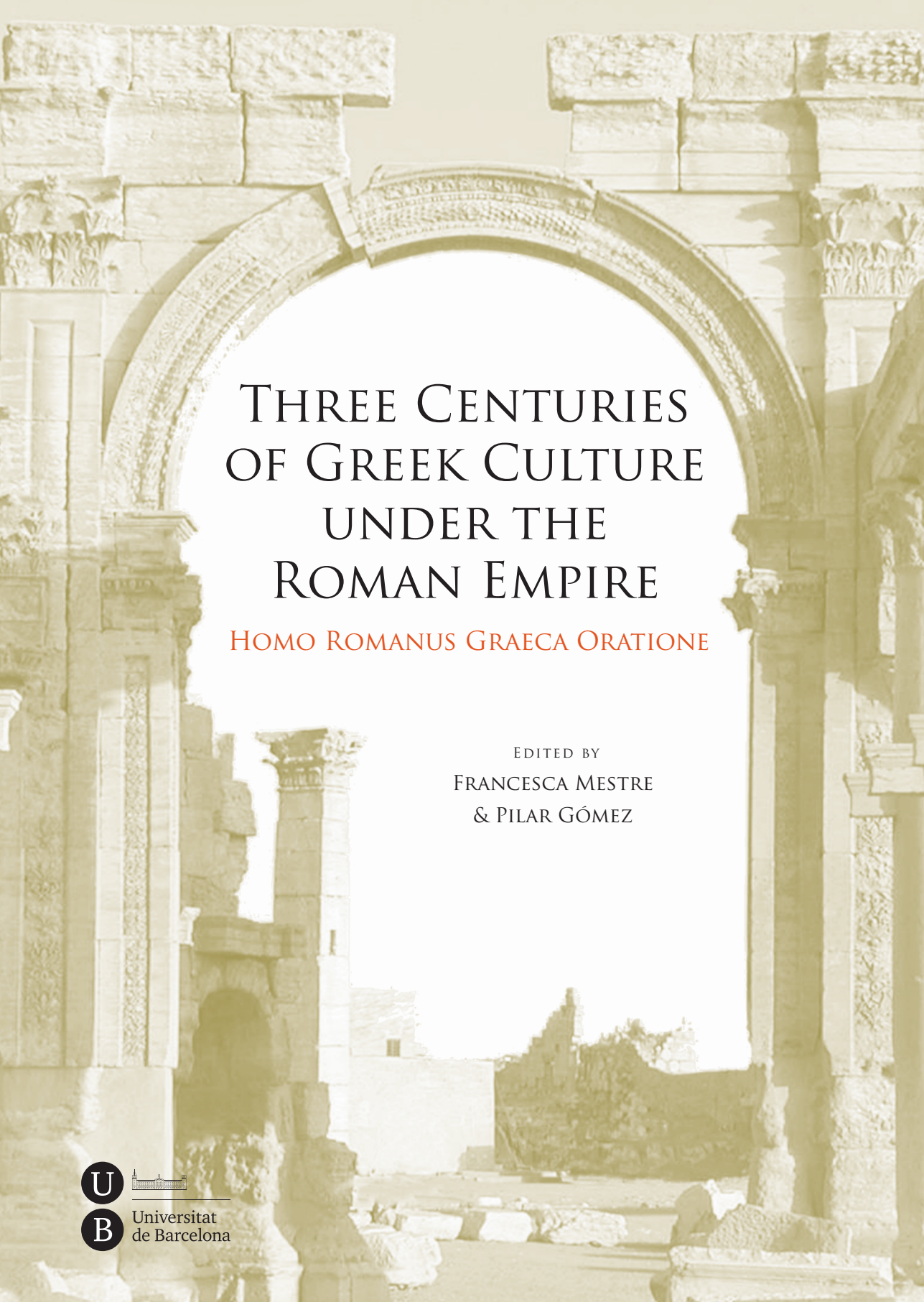




THREE CENTURIES OF GREEK CULTURE UNDER THE ROMAN EMPIRE

HOMO ROMANUS GRAECA ORATIONE

EDITED BY
FRANCESCA MESTRE
& PILAR GÓMEZ

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OF GREEK CULTURE
UNDER THE
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Universitat de Barcelona

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Foreword

Francesca Mestre

Greece and Rome: two concepts that, the vast majority of times we use them, refer to cultural realities beyond the geographical location we give them. Indeed, Greece does not mean, as it does nowadays, a country, a nation, just as Rome, when we talk about Antiquity, is much more than simply a city and its area of influence. And this is true not only because the documentary evidence we have from Antiquity is segmented and asymmetric. We know a great many things about Athens in the fifth century BC but very few things about other places in Greece, and even before the Empire, Rome was to be found in Rome itself but also in many other places about which we have much less documentation. What we do know, however, is that when we use the names of Greece and Rome we are describing practically everything we mean by Antiquity in the western world, sometimes through the sum of both concepts, sometimes through their contrast, and at a certain point through their coexistence and whether this tends towards integration or differentiation. It may seem paradoxical to observe the extent to which Greece and Rome very often refer to the same thing and yet very often refer to the complete opposite. Assimilation, superposition, confrontation, evolution, integration, fusion, identity and so on are all notions we have to use in order to explain a complex reality that nonetheless leaves a joint mark on Europe's process of development.

Contact between the two concepts, from a historical point of view, takes place far back in time. From the very founding of Rome and its expansion through the Italian Peninsula and Sicily, Greece is already present given that, from the Archaic Age onwards, a great number of Greek cities —those that made up *Magna Graecia*— were founded. These cities, at least because of their geographical proximity, had no little influence on the future of what Rome would later become.

The results of Alexander's conquests and the problems of political instability resulting from the break-up of Hellenistic territories later brought the Mediterranean powers face to face. Among these powers Rome, after vanquishing the Carthaginians, became more and more important and decisive. Many Greek territories were gradually annexed to the Roman Republic as senatorial provinces.

It was not until the constitution of the Empire that Greece and all the Hellenistic territories once and for all came to be, politically, part of the same entity: the Roman Empire.

Despite this obvious historical statement, the Greek language and emblematic cultural symbols remained alive and had a remarkable influence, then in turn became symbols of the Empire and enjoyed great prestige. Aulus Gellius, that extraordinary scholar of the second century AD who, in his work *Attic Nights*, assembled —it is said, for his son— a series of lecture notes, curiosities, information and short news items related to the Greek and Roman past, tells us that Cato the Elder criticized his contemporary Aulus Albinus with humour and a certain condescension for having written a history of Rome in Greek even though he apologized for his limited knowledge of the Greek language. Gellius introduces the anecdote with these words:

Quid senserit dixeritque M. Cato de Albino, qui homo Romanus Graeca oratione res Romanas uenia sibi ante eius imperitiae petita composuit.¹

These events, whether real or legendary, which would have taken place in the mid-2nd century BC, are reported by a man living four centuries later, and in the course of this period the meaning of the phrase «homo Romanus Graeca oratione» must surely have undergone a remarkable change as far as its references are concerned.

If we refer to Albinus and Cato, we are clearly speaking about Roman men from Rome — a little later in Gellius's text, Albinus, in order to apologize for his imperfect knowledge of Greek, explains that he is a Roman born in Latium («homo Romanus natus in Latio») and that the Greek language is therefore quite alien to him («Graeca oratio a nobis alienissima est»). Nevertheless, this is no reason not to risk writing a history of Rome in Greek: we must, then, certainly understand that, at that moment and for that man, the use of Greek, even if not completely correct, was a question of prestige to which one should aspire — despite Cato's opposition, which we sense in this passage from Gellius and in others when we are also told about the old censor's resistance to becoming Hellenized himself and, above all, to the Hellenization of Rome.²

1 Gell. 11.8: 'What Marcus Cato thought and said of Albinus, who, though a Roman, wrote a history of Rome in the Greek language, having first asked indulgence for his lack of skill in that tongue' (transl. J.C. Rolfe).

2 Cf. Plu., *Cat. Ma.* 12.5-7; 23.1-2; cf. also, the sharp criticism from Polybius (Plb. 39.1.5-9) addressed to Albinus, when he compared him to someone who trains for the athletic games and when presented on the public stage apologizes for being unable to endure the blows.

At that moment and in those circumstances, it is easy to observe how geographical separation corresponds with cultural and linguistic separation. We must not forget, however, that Greek superiority is generally admitted. A good example can be found in Cicero's words, when he acknowledges that:

Nam si quis minorem gloriae fructum putat ex Graecis versibus percipi quam ex Latinis, vehementer errat, propterea quod Graeca leguntur in omnibus fere gentibus, Latina suis finibus exiguis sane continentur.³

During the early years of the Empire, things change considerably. We find a clear piece of evidence in Quintilian, who, in his description of the different stages of the education of Roman youth, assumes as an indisputable fact that children learn Greek and Latin from the very beginning; he just wonders which should be taught first:

A sermone Graeco puerum incipere malo, quia Latinum, qui pluribus in usu est, uel nobis nolentibus perbibet, simul quia disciplinis quoque Graecis prius instituendus est, unde et nostrae fluxerunt.⁴

Precisely because these changes have taken place, Aulus Gellius finds it appropriate to tell this story as a curiosity because at the time he lived, in the second century AD, an attitude like Cato's was certainly rare, since Greek was a language that was fully accepted, known and used by the Romans and, even more significantly, the very name *homo Romanus* had changed its point of reference and no longer referred strictly to geography. Indeed, a citizen of Rome was a *homo Romanus*, as were many notables all over the Empire, especially on its Eastern side, who were also Roman citizens and, as everyone knows, had Greek as their first and practically only language. Among the vast literature in the Greek language that has reached us from the Imperial Age, the truth is that most of its authors are *homines Romani*, i.e. Roman citizens, even if their place of origin was the province of Syria, or Egypt, Athens or Pontus. The formulation «*homo Romanus Graeca oratione*», when relating to the times of Cato

3 Cic., *Arch.* 23: 'For if any one thinks that there is a smaller gain of glory derived from Greek verses than from Latin ones, he is greatly mistaken, because Greek poetry is read among all nations, Latin is confined to its own natural limits, which are narrow enough' (transl. C.D. Young).

4 Cf. Quint., *Inst.* 1.1,12-14: 'I prefer that a boy should begin with Greek, because Latin, being in general use, will be picked up by him whether we will or no; while the fact that Latin learning is derived from Greek is a further reason for his being first instructed in the latter' (transl. H.E. Butler).

and Albinus, insisted on the paradox of the two adjectives (*Romanus / Graeca*), while in Gellius's time and beyond—which are the periods the contributions to this book deal with—the juxtaposition of both adjectives is simply descriptive of a common fact of life: Romans who express themselves in Greek, as real and as common as Romans who express themselves in Latin.

Statements about the use of languages are therefore fairly clear indicators of how varied the Roman Empire was, culturally speaking, and all the more so if we take into account that underlying the use of language is a whole series of other first-rate elements: schooling, tradition, literary models, identity references and cultural references.

In the same context we must also consider another question of particular relevance: from the 2nd century onwards, Christianity is already culturally consolidated, i.e. beyond its beginnings in the religious possibility of salvation, Christian apologetic discourse spreads and enters the debate alongside pagan literary and philosophical production. It is therefore a new discourse that plays on the same ground, a new contribution that uses the same instruments and means of diffusion. To the intellectual voices of Christianity at the time, the questions of language choice, schooling, literary models and reference points of identity and culture have considerable importance too. They are also men of the Roman Empire and they prefer to use the Greek language, an excellent vehicle for what they call ecumenization in the vast and highly varied world of the Empire.

Our intention was to assemble in this volume various pieces of work that focus on these matters. Without attempting to be exhaustive—which would be impossible—we would like to present varied samples of how to look at these problems and thus contribute to this generalized reflection about a Roman Empire which, contrary to appearances, from its very beginnings contains a cultural heterogeneity that becomes homogeneous thanks to the points mentioned above.

It now only remains to express my gratitude to all those who in one way or another have been involved in the production of this volume. First of all we would like to thank all the authors for their willingness to take part in the project. Secondly, our thanks go to the institutions that with their funding made it possible to hold the preliminary meeting that set up the International Conference *Homo Romanus Graeca Oratio*ne: the University of Barcelona, the Faculty of Philology, the Ministry of Science and Innovation (projects FFI2008-01446 and FFI2009-08858) and the Ministry of the Economy and

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Introduction

Pilar Gómez

This volume gathers together, after several months' reflection and revision by the authors, a substantial part of the lectures presented at the International Conference *Homo Romanus Graeca Oratione*, which took place at the University of Barcelona in March 2009.

The aim of the conference was to set out some of the most important subjects concerning the survival of the concept of Greece and Greek identity under Roman political dominion between the 2nd and 4th centuries AD. This period places us at one extreme at the height of the Second Sophistic—the name by which we refer, as Philostratus did, to the movement behind the full resurgence of the literary and cultural tradition of the Greek archaic and classical world—and at the other, a time when Christianity is already the official religion of the Empire. The conference's initial proposals, which in most cases gave rise to rich discussions that are presumably taken into account in the definitive version of each paper, were basically the following: aspects related to education (παιδεία) and tradition; elements of identity and coexistence between Greece and Rome, or between pagans and Christians; rhetoric and literary questions which affect prose as well as verse genres; analyses related to language, whether Greek or Latin, which derive from situations of bilingualism or multilingualism; and contributions to the interpretation of non-literary documentary sources which are indispensable to the study of multiculturalism inside the Roman Empire. In keeping with this wide range of subjects which nonetheless come together as a whole in an attempt to systematize the cultural world of the Empire, the chapters of this volume—twenty-two pieces of work, of which six are in English, four in French, two in Italian, eight in Spanish and two in Catalan—although they could have been presented in a number of other ways, are actually grouped into four main areas: general context, function of literature, pagan authors, Christian authors.

GENERAL CONTEXT

A first attempt to assess the dynamism and vitality of Greekness under Roman dominion, to define what could be identified as Greek between the second and fourth centuries AD, is presented from the philosophical viewpoint by Michael Trapp, whose work (*Philosophia* between Greek and Latin culture: naturalized immigrant or eternal stranger?) contrasts the Greek consideration of philosophy as the very instrument of civilization with the vision of Latin intellectuals, to whom philosophy would be somewhat too Greek and therefore possibly a mere indication of refined instruction. Nevertheless, an examination of this opposition between Greeks and Romans at this period actually gives rise to more similarities than differences concerning philosophy, because the way this genuinely Greek phenomenon is perceived often varies depending on whether it is observed from the Eastern or the Western side of the Empire.

The extent to which the concept of Greekness was already losing political value and becoming identified with education —maybe as a consequence of the distribution of the chairs of rhetoric between the East and West of the Empire— is illustrated by Lluís González Julià (*Abdicatio Graeca*: transferencia legal en las declamaciones grecorromanas sobre desheredados), who sets out to demonstrate from the basis of a juridical concept within the framework of the declamatory genre that, regardless of whether it be called ἀποκήρυξις or *abdicatio*, both terms refer to the same legal figure.

The rhetorical context of the literature of this period also contains the consolidation of new narrative genres, as explained by Consuelo Ruiz Montero in her paper —La *Vida de Esopo* (rec. G): niveles de educación y contexto retórico—, in which she links the anonymous text of the *Vita Aesopi* with the works of other authors of the time in order to show the erudite and sophisticated nature of this novel as well as of its main character.

School and rhetoricians undoubtedly played a fundamental role in the homogeneity of the schooling of future *litterati* who moved across the imperial geography, since oratory teachers decided what texts had to be read, or at least what pieces had to form the basic schooling for a learned individual, for a πεπαιδευμένος. Among these, José Antonio Fernández Delgado (Babrio en la escuela grecorromana) suggests that Babrius's fables play a central role in the learning process. The Greek fabulist was rapidly incorporated into the teachers' repertoire because of his great usefulness in the practice of composition and paraphrase techniques and because he was used as a model in writing exercises, as can be seen from the papyrological evidence presented in this paper.

In addition to this, a volume that aims to gather together various approaches to the analysis of the differences and similarities between Greece and Rome when still two distinct realities, or possibly two sides of the same coin or even a polyhedric Graeco-Roman figure, must necessarily take into account not only the literary and social aspects that characterize the period under study but also any linguistic phenomena of special significance in a bilingual society, because all things considered, bilingualism is also a symbol of identity — and not an unimportant one. Thus the correspondence between Fronto and his pupil, the emperor Marcus Aurelius, is used by Emmanuelle Valette («Le vêtement bigarré des danseurs de pyrrhique»: pratiques du bilinguisme dans la correspondance de Fronton et Marc-Aurèle) to raise some questions about the presence and function in Latin-written texts of Greek terms whose meaning exceeds their mere technical and rhetorical character to the extent that this manifestation of bilingualism also contributes to the survival of the cultural model identified with Greece.

Papyrological documentation is a primordial source for detecting bilingualism phenomena in the Graeco-Roman Empire, as underlined by Alberto Nodar's contribution (Greeks writing Latin, Romans writing Greek?). Using the study of a Herculaneum papyrus as a starting point, he shows the extent to which Latin texts could be influenced by Greek texts not only as regards content but also in their formal aspects, the palaeographical characteristics with which they were materially written, since in some cases the scribe manifestly chooses to imitate Greek handwriting to give greater dignity to the text, as illustrated by Nodar's choice of the *Carmen de Bello Actiaco*.

A parallel interference between graphical systems is observed by Antònia Soler (Resseguint els grecs a partir de la memòria dels morts: cinc peces d'epigrafia grega funerària a Roma) in certain pieces of Greek epigraphy highly connoted by the Roman context in which they were carved, when Greek and Latin coexisted closely and were part of one and the same culture, so that they often ended up being used interchangeably or in a complementary way in a bilingual society.

FUNCTION OF LITERATURE

Greek literary tradition is the keystone of scholarly and rhetorical learning in the early centuries of the Empire, so looking into the past characterizes the literary production of the period studied in this volume. We are not dealing with static looking, however, because this past is used as a bottomless well

from which anything can be recovered and rescued if it might serve to recreate the ancient texts, which have already become classical and for this very reason can therefore be adapted to new circumstances and permit the shaping of new cultural traits to take place within them. In this sense the contribution by Carles Miralles (*Memòria i ús dels textos*) is an elaborate exercise which follows a path from the novel, going back into Homer and then returning to Dio of Prusa to explain the way in which authors of the period worked with texts belonging to literary tradition. These texts were prestigious mainly because they had been torn from their original context and, made familiar through anthologies, they could be used at different levels: the teacher, the rhetorician and the sophist in this context become natural mediators for using literature without having to worry about it.

Likewise Roberto Nicolai, with a paper whose very title is a reformulation of a famous verse by Horace (*Roma capta? Letteratura latina e sistema letterario greco nei primi secoli dell'impero*), studies the value and use of literary canons, in this case from the viewpoint of the relationship between Greek and Latin literature. In his paper Nicolai reveals how Latin authors encountered in their Greek models not only stylistic paradigms but also examples that could be transferred into Latin culture, and hence in this process of cultural translation Latin could set itself up as a language of culture and learning. Thus Latin authors are no mere imitators of Greek literary forms, but worthy competitors in terms of cultural equality thanks to the linguistic and literary reflection that this process of appropriation necessarily entails.

Meanwhile Paolo Desideri (*Storia declamata e storia scritta nel secondo secolo dell'Impero: Dione, Plutarco e la rinascita della cultura greca*) analyses how the special interest in narrating historical events from the Greek past in the second century AD shows the will and intention of certain authors, whether their work was closer to the historiographical genre or sophistic declamation, to turn the history of classical Greece into a symbol of Greek identity and survival inside the Roman Empire, especially on its Eastern side.

The permeability of different rhetorical forms when they integrate various literary genres is undoubtedly an innovative element in the literary production of this late period, despite the mimetic tone that characterizes it. To underline that a certain form may not correspond to the content that literary tradition assigns it is the aim of the contribution by Ivana Chialva (*Elogio, adulación y parodia: desconciertos en torno al encomio* *Imágenes* de Luciano), who takes as a reference text perhaps the most elaborate *ἐκφρασις* by the writer of Samosata and discovers in it an *ἐπαινος*, aimed at Panthea. However, a detailed analysis of the sophistic procedures used by Lucian to mask the real intention