

Approaches to Greek and Latin im/politeness

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS



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Contrasting the Politeness Systems of ancient Greece and Rome

Students of Politeness aim to describe, in a theoretically robust way, how a speaker, primarily through language used, attends to all aspects of the speech situation (concerns for his own “face”, the addressee’s “face,” the norms and conventions governing that speech situation and so on). Words like “please” (“pray,” “prithee,” “I beg”); indirect requests (“I hope you can let this go,” as Trump is alleged to have said to former FBI director, James Comey); hedged refusals to comply (“well, ehrrm, I’d like to read your essay, but I have to wash my hair”): these are some examples of this “linguistic politeness”, taken from the levels of (the modern English) lexicon, syntax and discourse.

Scholars have zeroed in precisely these “polite” features when studying a language group, whether speakers of modern Hebrew, women in the Mexican community of Tenejapa, or the practitioners of an ancient literary genre (the politeness used by Cicero and his correspondents). The results illuminate how members of a group verbally construct relations with each other — these relations being constitutive, in turn, of their specific community. Equally illuminating are comparisons between two or more of these language groups with respect to the “politeness system” used: thus we have comparisons of the politeness systems of modern Argentinian Spanish, Hebrew, and English (*inter alia*) (Blum-Kulka *et al.* 1989), modern Greek and (British) English (Sifianou 1992); and modern Greek and Turkish (Sifianou & Bayraktaroglu 2001), to name some examples.

It is high time to turn the comparative focus to ancient Greek and Latin. This paper will do so, as its author believes that through comparisons, Greek politeness can shed light on the Latin, and vice versa. The corpus chosen is that of the New Comic poet Menander (late 4th early 3rd C BCE), and the Latin comic poets from two to three generations later, Plautus and Terence (late 3rd to mid 2nd C BCE). The method is to gather and analyze the relevant data (mainly imperatives and imperative softeners, but also greetings and hedges). This paper offers the first step towards a more comprehensive comparison. Specifically, I will present findings based on data gathered from the aforementioned corpora, and make some first attempts at interpretation. Here, then, are the findings (the questions they raise are put *in italics*; potential answers to these questions will form the conclusion of the paper.)

- **There is no indication that Greeks were more polite than Romans for the period studied, if we use percentage of imperatives softened as a measure.** Consider that 9.8% of all (present and aorist) imperatives are softened in Menander, while 8.0% of all (present) imperatives in Plautus, and 7.8% of all such imperatives in Terence are softened. (It is legitimate to compare the Greek aorist with the Latin present imperative, since comparison of the *Bacchides* with Menander’s “Twice Deceived,” indicates that Roman poets used Latin present imperatives to translate

Greek aorist imperatives.) **If we compare these proportions, we find that there is no significant difference between the percentage of imperatives softened in Menander (on the one hand) and that in Roman Comedy (on the other).**

If, as true, no one group could be said to be “more polite,” nevertheless was there a typically “Greek” or “Roman” way of conveying politeness?

- **Characters in Menander soften imperatives with speech-act verbs (like “I beg”) significantly less often than do characters of Roman comedy.** To soften imperatives, speakers in Menander use first-person speech act verbs like *ἵκετεύω* only 1.7% of the time (9 out of 519 total aorist and present imperatives) while characters in Terence modify their imperatives with such a speech act verb (*obsecro, oro, imploro* and *peto* are the verbs employed) 4.0% of the time (31 of 774 present imperatives); in Plautus, 4.0% (92 of 3037 present imperatives). **When we compare these proportions, we find that there is a significant difference.**

By what means did speakers in Menander convey directives in a polite way, if not by use of words for “please”?

- **In Menander, women soften their imperatives more often than do men** Elsewhere I have shown that in Roman Comedy, women are more polite than men: in Plautus, women soften imperatives at a rate of three times that of men; in Terence women do so twice as often. In Menander, women soften imperatives at three times the rate of men.
- **And, also in Menander, women incline more to positive politeness than do men: this is the exact same pattern we find in Plautus and Terence.** For Menander, if we lump softeners for both present and aorist imperatives together, we find the following: of the total 10 softeners put in female speakers’ mouths, 7 (70%) are positively polite. By contrast, of the 38 total softeners put in the mouths of male speakers, 19 (50%), are positively polite. We find similar patterns in Plautus and Terence (Barrios-Lech 2016: 49, 54–56).

*This raises the question: are Plautus and Terence, then, **not** reflecting Roman speech patterns, but rather the patterns they found in their source materials?*

In my paper, I will present and explicate these findings, and make an attempt at answering the questions, given in *italics* above. This paper, then, serves as a first step towards my ultimate goal: to contrast the politeness systems of ancient Greece and Rome.

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Turn management in Roman comedy dialogue

Already in the seminal work on politeness by Brown & Levinson (1987: 232) the conversation structure is stated to be “extremely sensitive to violation” and, hence, its management requires a constant face-work. The studies of Latin every-day dialogues, as better depicted in Plautus and Terence, have identified ready-made mechanisms of opening and closing conversation (Roesch 2002, 2005, 2007; Poccetti 2010; Barrios-Lech 2016: 177-195), both including mitigation of the face threats implied by such communicative actions. In those highly ritualized communicative manoeuvres, according to Laver (1981: 290), “maximum routine reflects highest risk” for the interlocutors.

In turn management, on the local level of the conversational structure, less often fixed formulae seem to be at use (see, however, Barrios-Lech 2014 for *quid ais?*), which makes more difficult any close-cut classification. The aim of the present paper is to indicate the means by which the Plautine and the Terentian speakers have to (a) pass over, (b) usurp and (c) maintain their turn of speech.

The study of interruptions and attention-getters carried out by Barrios-Lech (2016: 157-176) offers some interesting insights on the linguistic behaviour of the *palliata* characters differentiated by gender and social position. Still, some further application of the tools developed by the Conversational Analysis (Sacks *et al.* 1974; O’Connell *et al.* 1990; Schegloff 2000; Stivers *et al.* 2009) may shed some more light on the turn-allocating strategies represented in the Roman comedy. Our presentation will focus on politeness phenomena in signalling the changeover points and handling the overlapping speech, not without forgetting the peculiarities of the on-stage discourse (Herman 1998). Thus, hopefully, a more nuanced view on the turn-taking dynamics in Plautus and Terence will be offered.

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How to be polite without saying ‘please’ in Ancient Greek?

It is well-known that Ancient Greek, as well as Latin, had no equivalent word for ‘please’. Nevertheless, several polite strategies were available for the speakers. The inventory made by Poccetti (2014) for Ancient Greek mainly includes syntactical devices (conditional sentences, embedded clauses) and parenthetical metadirectives (such as *ἵκετεύω*, *δέομαι*, etc. that may develop into pragmatic markers — see among others Ghezzi and Molinelli 2014 for Latin), even if more subtle and indirect strategies are also possible (see Lloyd 2004, Denizot 2011: 400-491). But before their full pragmaticalization it has been noticed that such mitigators are used for a higher ranking of impositions (see Dickey 2012 for a nuanced account of Latin). Thus we can make the assumption that mitigators were not requested for small routine requests and all readers of Greek texts know that bare imperatives are uttered frequently without any mitigation.

I would like to further explore the expression of politeness in routine requests, with a small ranking of imposition. A parallel with a modern language may be useful here. In contemporary Danish there is no equivalent word for ‘please’; as in Ancient Greek several syntactical strategies are available (the equivalent for ‘I would like to’, ‘Would you be kind to’, ‘Could you’ inter alia). More interestingly, as has been showed by Levisen and Waters (2015), the Danish discourse particle *lige* is used with imperatives as a trivialization and dedramatization device for a request. It is normally added to any routine request in a shop (‘I will *lige* have one bread’) or in a bus (‘I shall *lige* go out’), for example, or any routine request with a low ranking of imposition (‘Close *lige* the door’) since it signals the request as expected in the context. An interesting characteristic is that the particle can not be used for a request of greater importance (*‘Give me *lige* a gift’, *‘Sign *lige* the contract’). The reason for such a strategy is explained by Levisen and Waters as a cultural specificity: a general avoidance of formality, an egalitarian representation of society, and the shared feeling of Danes of belonging to the same ‘family’.

These characteristics are interesting for a comparison with Ancient Greek where the rise of routine polite formulae in the Hellenistic period is linked with a change of society, from (roughly speaking) a democratic and egalitarian society to a highly stratified society (see Dickey 2009, 2016). As far as linguistic devices are concerned, Classical Greek has a wide range of discourse particles that can be candidates for signaling small routine requests. Among them the particles *δή* and *νυν* and the lexicalized imperatives *ἄγε*, *φέρε* and *ἴθι*. My study uses Platonic dialogues and Aristophanes’ and Aeschylus’ plays in order to find out which ones are actually part of politeness devices. Therefore this study could be entitled: do particles have something to do with politeness in Classical Greek?

The possibility that these linguistic devices play a role in politeness strategies has not been explored yet. This is not only due to the fact that politeness phenomena are still understudied in Classical languages (see Unceta Gómez 2014 for an overview); it also comes from the fact that devices of trivialization actually can be rude if they are used for demanding requests (see Fedriani 2017 for a similar ambiguity in Latin).

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Conversation Analysis and Impoliteness in Greek Drama

My paper will address itself to two recent developments in politeness studies in general linguistics. The first is the dramatic increase of attention that has been given to impoliteness phenomena (cf. esp. Bousfield 2008, Culpeper 2011); the second is a growing discomfort in the literature (cf. esp. Watts 2003) with the notion that the (im)politeness value of any utterance could ever be (mechanically) derived from linguistic principles (as described, for instance, in the Brown-Levinson model), without sufficient attention for the discursive context and the struggle in that context over the very concept of politeness. As Culpeper summarises the complaint (2011: 7), ‘we should be focusing squarely on the articulation of that struggle in discourse; in other words of the [...] member’s own [...] conception of impoliteness is revealed in their discourse’.

In my attempt to fulfill this brief for Greek literature, I will analyse several passages from Greek tragedy and in which that conflictual status is explicitly verbalized (Greek tragedy is an appropriate genre, since, as scholars have pointed out (e.g. Leezenberg 2005), the default presuppositions of cooperation present in some pragmatic theories of interaction do not seem to hold in it. My aim is to assess what such passages can tell us about face-management in Greek tragic discourse and the principles of (im)politeness that are operative there. My methodology will be heavily informed by Conversation Analysis (cf. e.g. Sidnell & Stivers 2012), which is (as Culpeper points out, 2011: 7) is highly suitable for tracing the struggle over politeness as it arises in interaction.

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The pragmatic development of *si (tibi/vobis) placet* and cognate forms between politeness and impoliteness

This paper focuses on the politeness expression *si (tibi/vobis) placet*, which generally functions as a hedge in orders and requests, as in (1), where it tones down the illocutionary force of a directive act:

- (1) *parcas istis verbis si placet* (Afran. com. 355)

This courtesy marker presumably constitutes a pragmatic development of the ancient formula *si dis placet* (see, e.g., Fraenkel 1956 and Hofmann 1985: 290), which originally carried a religious meaning ('gods willing!'), and as such is found in Plautus (ex. 2) and in Terence. Evidence for this ancient sacral value comes from a comment by Donatus, who notes that *dis* refers *per quos iuratum est* (ex. 3):

- (2) HE. *Edepol rem meam constabiliui, quom illos emi de praeda a quaestoribus: expediui ex servitute filium, si dis placet.* (Plaut. Capt. 454)
- (3) 6 SI DIS PLACET *bene interpositum ad inuidiam 'si dis placet', scilicet per quos iuratum est.* (Don. Comm. Ter. Ad. actus 3, vers. 476, § 6)

In ancient comedians, *si dis placet* is also used with an ironic nuance, for instance when it modifies a trivial and/or morally execrable wish, functioning in terms of a mock polite expression (see, e.g., Culpeper 2011: 17). Arguably, this sarcastic employment creates a mismatch between the propositional content being conveyed and the actual context of interaction, thus playing a crucial role in the development of comic mechanisms (ex. 4):

- (4) *si dis placet, spero me habere, qui hunc meo excruciem modo* (Ter. Eun. 919-920)

In this study I will look at the pragmaticalization path leading to the conventionalization of the ancient formula as a shortened expression of politeness, therefore considering its diachronic development and sociolinguistic and diaphasic characterization across different periods and genres of the Latin literature. Parallel to that, I will discuss both typical polite uses, which are frequent e.g. in Cicero and in Petronius, and impolite uses connected to mock politeness and overpoliteness. The analysis also takes into account cognate pragmatic patterns introduced by *si*, such as *si libet*, *si (tibi) est commodum*, and negatively polite expressions like *si tibi molestum non est*, *si (tibi) grave non erit* (on which see, e.g., Barrios-Lech 2016: 57).

I will also pay attention to two syntactic features of the *si (dis/tibi/vobis) placet* expression, focusing on their functional and pragmatic aspects. First, I will discuss the semantic function played by the conditional conjunction within this pattern, which developed from the

ancient adverb *si* ‘so’ with a gradual bleaching of the original deictic value, which, however, is still present in the ancient formula *si dis placet* ‘lit. so it pleases the gods’ (cf. Bertocchi & Maraldi 2011: 98). Second, I will also consider the parenthetical nature of this pattern, which is likely to have fostered the acquisition of pragmatic functions (for a discussion of properties of parenthetical clauses in Latin, see Risselada 1989 and Bolkestein 1998).

Last, I will argue that the development leading to the pragmaticalization of *si (tibi/vobis) placet* can be interpreted as a case of Politeness-Induced Semantic Change (Beeching 2005), according to which considerations of politeness (e.g., conflict avoidance, mitigation) promote new form-function configurations which may trigger linguistic change.

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Honoris causa nominatus:
form and functions of third party politeness

Politeness has been studied in Latin first and foremost in connection with the relation between speakers (writers) and their addressees. However, in a number of cases speakers seem to feel obliged to express their respect to a third party, cf. (1). Sulla, although involved in the case at hand, was not present during the trial.

- (1) *Bona patris huiusce Sex. Rosci, quae sunt sexagiens, quae de viro clarissimo et fortissimo, L. Sulla, quem honoris causa nomino, duobus milibus nummum sese dicit emisse adulescens vel potentissimus hoc tempore nostrae civitatis, L. Cornelius Chrysogonus.* (Cic. S. Rosc. 6)

In other cases, however, Cicero also pays respect to third persons who are present. An example is (2), taken from his speech *Pro Marcello*, in which Cicero addresses Caesar most of the time in a direct way, as in (3):

- (2) *Atque hoc C. Caesaris iudicium, patres conscripti, quam late pateat attendite: omnes enim, qui ad illa arma fato sumus nescio quo rei publicae misero funestoque compulsi, etsi aliqua culpa tenemur erroris humani, scelere certe liberati sumus. Nam cum M. Marcellum deprecantibus vobis rei publicae conservavit, me et mihi et item rei publicae, nullo deprecante, reliquos amplissimos viros et sibi ipsos et patriae reddidit ...* (Cic. Marc. 13)

- (3) *Quo gravior tua liberalitas, C. Caesar, nobis, qui illa vidimus* (Cic. Marc. 16)

In our contribution, we want to present a first tentative exploration of the use of what e.g. Geoffrey Leech (2014) discusses as ‘third person politeness’, by giving, first, an impression of the variety of the expressions involved and, secondly, discuss their use and function in letters and especially speeches. *Formulae* such as *honoris causa nomino* seem to function primarily as what Jon Hall (2009) has labelled ‘politeness of respect’, but may also involve redressive functions, for instance, as in (1), to downplay the face threatening potential of an accusation. Thirdly we will briefly discuss how the various forms of ‘third person politeness’ fit in models of politeness that are primarily designed to analyse addressee oriented politeness.

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Latin *urbanitas*: identity, humour and im/politeness

This paper, contributing to a growing body of research into politeness in the ancient world, takes as a starting point Unceta Gómez’s (2014) remark that the terms *urbanitas*, *humanitas*, *observantia*, *decorum*, *dignitas* and *verecundia* are relevant to our understanding of Latin politeness. This study specifically delves into the concept of *urbanitas* through a discursive approach focusing on the pragmatic metacomments associated with it and the social/interactional aspects they cast light on. My analysis is based on 81 instances of the lemma *urbanitas* retrieved from the 12M word *Latin Library* corpus (Guardamagna & Hardie 2015), most of which are concentrated in the period roughly ranging I c. BC – I c. AD.

My study bears out the widely held definition that *urbanitas* refers to “the perceived qualities of a city-dweller, such as polish, wit, elegance, and refinement” (Dominik & Hall 2006: 494) both in manners and in speech. Whereas the literature explores the function of *urbanitas* as an in-group marker for the cultivated *élite*, similarly to XVII-XVIII century English *politeness*/French *politesse* (Watts 2003: 37 ff.), aspects related to wit are considerably less explored than matters of identity.

To plug this gap, this paper explores the relationship between humour and politeness with particular attention to those contexts in which interactions are presented (e.g. in the form of anecdotes) thus revealing that *urbanitas* ‘wit’ actually conveys a range of functions going beyond mere entertainment (which is found for instance in Petronius, *Sat.* 36–37). Examples of these are:

- politeness: defusing animosity/mitigating hostility, showing deference (e.g. Quintilian *Inst.* 6, 3, 10);
- impoliteness: scorn, derision, insult, practical jokes (e.g. Valerius Maximus *Dict.* 7, 5, 1)
- mock-impoliteness: banter (e.g. Seneca the Younger, *Const.* 11, 3);
- possibly also mock-politeness: flattery (e.g. Petronius, *Sat.* 52).

The data also sheds some light on the communities of practice in which certain behaviours are appropriate (e.g. Seneca the Younger, *Const.* 11, 3 on slaves vs friends) and power relations (e.g. Seneca the Elder, *Suas.* I, 5 on the emperor/*princeps* and his subjects).

My analysis — which is largely, though not exclusively, based on Culpeper (2011) — is going to be completed by a similar investigation of the adjective *urbanus* and the adverb *urbane*, and paves the way for a more extensive analysis of Latin metapragmatic comments in the field of politeness.

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JON HALL (UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO)

Cicero *De Officiis* 1.132–136 and the art of polite conversation

At *De Officiis* 1.132–136, Cicero presents some observations on the art of conversation (*sermo*). His remarks are a curious mix, and this paper considers what insights (if any) they give us into Roman conceptions of politeness. Although some of Cicero’s suggestions are strongly influenced by his Stoic source (Panaetius), I suggest that we can discern several basic polite concerns: consideration for the feelings and wants of others; the adoption of a generally non-confrontational manner; the use of mitigating facework when engaging in criticism of others; and the use of polite fictions in social encounters. Nevertheless, the discussion remains cursory and eclectic, with no mention of specific linguistic strategies.

For a more detailed understanding of (verbal and non-verbal) politeness strategies used in aristocratic conversations, we need to turn instead to the fictional depictions of intellectual debate in the dialogues of Cicero and Varro.

FEDERICA IURESCIA (ZÜRICH UNIVERSITÄT)

**Impoliteness in non-literary genres:
the *Colloquium Harleianum***

The paper proposed intends to analyse impoliteness phenomena as represented in an excerpt from *Colloquium Harleianum*, one of the text in the *Colloquia* of the *Hermeneumata Pseudodositheana* (Dickey 2012).

This text from the phrasebook part of a manual intended for foreign language learners presents impoliteness forms and metapragmatic comments which paves the way for a comparison with impoliteness as depicted in literary genres (III a. C. – II d. C.).

Impoliteness theories — the most influential study in the field being Culpeper (2011) — help to appreciate the use and distribution of linguistic and non-linguistic behaviours expressing impoliteness. I will draw on this theoretical background, paying attention to available emic clues — as, e.g. metapragmatic comments, or interlocutors' reactions — in order to test the validity of modern theories applied to ancient texts. Such proceedings will offer the chance to consider aspects of Latin language not yet deeply investigated in the realm of Historical Linguistics. Many scholars worked on politeness — for a comprehensive overview see Unceta Gómez (forthcoming) — but relatively scarce attention has been paid to impoliteness in Latin texts. This paper aims to be a further contribution in this direction.

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MICHAEL LLOYD (UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN)

The hortative aorist

The final section on the aorist indicative in Goodwin's *Moods and Tenses* identifies the following usage: 'In questions with τί οὐ ['why not'], expressing surprise that something is not already done, and implying an exhortation to do it' (§62). Others (e.g. Kühner-Gerth) identify urgency or impatience in such questions. A minority of scholars deny that these aorists refer to past time, and explain them in aspectual terms. This paper will offer a new interpretation in terms of politeness theory.

FRANCESCO MARI (UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI GENOVA /
POLIS. THE JERUSALEM INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGES AND HUMANITIES)

The Athenians' ἀκολασία as impoliteness.

A look to Pseudo-Xenophon, *Constitution of the Athenians*, I 10 from the point of view of ancient Greek politeness

To criticise the Athenian democracy, the author of the oligarchic fifth-century pamphlet on the *Constitution of the Athenians* normally focuses on the economic and political aspects. Accordingly, his denunciation of his fellow citizens' demeanour might raise eyebrows, for the moralistic tone seems unusual for the Pseudo-Xenophon's writing. Chapter I 10 of the *Constitution of the Athenians* condemns the citizens of Athens for their ἀκολασία (licence, disorder) in terms of appearance, in which it is no longer possible to tell them apart from slaves. In this paper, I shall link the concept of ἀκολασία as used by the Pseudo-Xenophon to the broader category of ancient Greek politeness. The latter can be elaborated by framing the ancient Greek cultural tenet which links an individual's σχῆμα (the exterior appearance) to his ἦθος (the inner disposition) into contemporary research on the sociology of politeness, a compound code of social rules regarding language as well as behaviour, gestures, attitudes, way of dress, etc.

Using this method, it is not only possible to show the coherence of chapter I 10 with the rest of the pamphlet, but also to provide an interesting explanation of the shift that, by the last quarter of the fifth century BC, had separated the Athenians' social mores from those of other Greek cities.

FRANCESCA MENCACCI (UNIVERSITÀ DI SIENA)

Text as interaction.

***Ut mihi videtur* as a verbal hedge in Latin literary texts**

The talk will dwell on the pragmatic functions of parenthetical *ut mihi videtur*, which, like others similar epistemic expressions (*ut opinor, credo, mea quidem sententia* etc.), seems to work in the text as a hedging device. The focus will principally be on Cicero's use of the phrase, to illustrate in context the discourse effects of this expression in the language of the élite.

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PIERA MOLINELLI (UNIVERSITÀ DI BERGAMO)

The origin of T/V distinction in Latin: from socio-affective to formal-reverential meanings

The seminal study by Brown & Gilman (1960) about the distinction between “a familiar and a polite pronoun” (1960: 254) has been widely discussed as regards several theoretical aspects, but not as regards the rise of this opposition in Latin (with a few exceptions, cf. Haverling 1995). Brown and Gilman recall previous scholars (Byrne 1936 & Châtelain 1880) in explaining the rise of the T/V dichotomy as expression of power distinction due to the presence of two emperors in the Roman Empire in the fourth century.

This presentation challenges this statement by discussing and bringing new data on the following points:

- the presence of two emperors is not decisive in itself, because in republican Rome there were two consuls and this did not trigger a T/V distinction; other socio-cultural conditions have to be called into question;
- in the fourth century the T/V distinction is actually attested in written documents, but firstly, and before, this appears in the Christian context, where the authority is a single person;
- the analysis of some documents attesting dialogic forms during a span of 4-5 centuries (e.g. Cicero’s *In Verrem*, letters both of secular and ecclesiastic domain, Molinelli 2015) shows that the use of non referential plural begins from the first person NOS with inclusive values some centuries before the two emperors;
- while non referential NOS spread to other values (inclusive > majestic), another linguistic device is at work: nominal address terms extend to serve asymmetric relationships;
- once the type *nostra clementia/benignitas/maiestas* is established to address a single power position, the symmetric address form VOS develops;
- the role of the Christian hierarchy and its establishing during the first three centuries of our era is widely unconsidered as regards these studies, but the letters of the first Popes and outstanding Christian authorities unveil the encoding of formal relationships in the society;
- we can find several bridging contexts for both strategies during some centuries, but, interestingly, no explicit information on politeness distinction is found in contemporary description of the Latin language or in formal education (as attested in *Colloquia scholica*, a collection of bilingual didactic texts).

The purpose of this presentation is to deepen the Latin situation in order to lend more weight to the semantic-pragmatic processes and to the sociocultural conditions, which are at

the origin of the *ego>Nos* and then *tu>Vos* developments. Allegedly, we can finally leave the two emperors' hypothesis aside.

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SOPHIE ROESCH (UNIVERSITÉ FRANÇOIS RABELAIS–TOURS)

Counter-strategies to impoliteness in Latin comedy

The *uis comica* of Plautus' comedies relies, among other things, on conflict and on the way the characters strive to dominate each other. Impoliteness is frequently used as a tool to belittle the opponent and strengthen one's power.

When a character is attacked by another one, by means of a FTA, he is usually expected to react to it. If he does, there are two main counter-strategies that he may apply — which are not mutually exclusive from one another (cf. Culpeper, Bousfield & Wichmann, 2003: 1562-1568, as well as Bousfield 2008: 206-221):

- an offensive strategy (i.e. the decision to respond to the FTA with another one, with the risk of starting a conflict spiral).
- a defensive strategy, aiming to defend one's own face.

Starting from this pattern, we intend to describe the way in which, in Roman comedy, characters respond to impoliteness when they are targeted by it, depending on the circumstances, on their social status, and on their respective status at the time of the aggression.

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GIADA SORRENTINO (ALBERT-LUDWIGS-UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG)

An integrated pragmatic approach to conversational openings in Menander's comedy

By analysing verbal interaction with methods borrowed from the field of pragmatics, scholars have shed much light on the structure and function of dialogues in Roman comedy. On the contrary, comparable work on Menander's dialogues is limited and remains a *desideratum*.

My paper is part of a more comprehensive investigation into Menandrian verbal interaction, which aims to fill this gap in our studies. Here, I analyse conversational openings from an integrated pragmatic perspective, incorporating *inter alia* conversation analysis, speech act theory, as well as the most important im/politeness models.

The opening sequence is an especially delicate phase of any interaction. Through a series of highly ritualised acts (like the exchange of greetings), the interlocutors come into contact, reveal their respective stances toward each other, and prepare themselves to broach the first (or main) topic of the conversation. In a relatively short time span, they position themselves relative to one another, before the subject matter of the interaction is clearly defined. The structure of the conversational opening is largely determined by the modalities of this respective positioning, and in turn influences the subsequent phases of the interaction. An integrated pragmatic approach is, to my mind, particularly well-suited to studying how Menandrian dialogue exhibits the different aspects that help structure this initial communicative stage in real-life interactions.

In the first part of my paper, I describe the most important types of conversational openings in Menandrian dialogues. This includes to what extent the communicative situation, the characters' personalities, their social status, and their interpersonal relationships determine the opening's structure and linguistic form. I then turn my attention to *Dyskolos* and discuss the significance of the conversational openings and the therein employed im/politeness strategies for characterising the protagonist and for generating comic effects from his incorrigible refusal to communicate.

LUIS UNCETA GÓMEZ (UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MADRID)

Being polite the roman way.

Metapragmatic comments in the comedies of Plautus and Terence (and their implications for a theory of Latin politeness)

Concurrently with the development of the so-called first order approaches to politeness phenomena (or politeness₁), and the emphasis on participants' perceptions (Watts 1992, 2003; Locher & Watts 2005), special attention has been paid to metapragmatic comments on politeness (see, for instance, Spencer-Oatey 2011), that is to say, "those elements that provide an assessment regarding the appropriateness of participants communicative behaviour and/or feedback on the ongoing discussions" (Kleinke & Bös 2015: 58).

Without a doubt, in the absence of native speakers, the study of first order politeness in ancient languages entails a number of difficulties, both methodological and theoretical (see Kádár & Culpeper 2010, and regarding Latin, Unceta Gómez 2014: § 4). Even so, besides the semantic analysis of the metalanguage of politeness (Unceta Gómez forth.), and the examination of the reactions of the interactants (or lay observers) in dialogic texts, the study of im/politeness metadiscourse is one of the prime ways to access native ideas on im/politeness in corpus languages such as Latin. Some studies have already dealt with historical corpora from this perspective (Jucker et al. 2012; Jucker & Taavitsainen 2014), but with the praiseworthy exception of Mencacci (2016), this is an understudied topic in Latin.

Roman comedy is a very rich source of information in this regard, which provides us with an important number of testimonies of metapragmatic comments regarding the appropriateness of the participants in a communicative exchange, assessments which allows us to glimpse what a Latin speaker might have considered (or not) as im/polite linguistic behaviour. In (1), for instance, the speaker explicitly states his intention to be polite, and (2) offers an assessment on the appropriate language for the members of a given social class:

- (1) LY. *Blande hominem compellabo. Hospes hospitem
salutat. Saluom te aduenire gaudeo.* (Plaut., *Poen.* 685-686)

(2) PER. *Quin tu istanc orationem hinc ueterem atque antiquam amoues?*

Proletario sermone nunc quidem, hospes, utere;

nam i solent, quando accubuerunt, ubi cena apposita est, dicere:

“Quid opus fuit hoc <sumpto> sumptu tanto nostra gratia?

Insaniuisti hercle, nam idem hoc hominibus sat erat decem.”

Quod eorum causa opsonatum est culpant et comedunt tamen. (Plaut., *Mil.* 751-756)

Thus, taking into account the concept of relational work and the distinction between polite and politic behaviour (Watts 2003), in this paper I will address the metapragmatic comments that can be recognized in the comedies by Plautus and Terence as a means to understand Roman conceptions of politeness (i.e. the emic perspective), and the social and moral order underlying those conceptions (see Kádár & Haugh 2013: 181-206). This understanding is a prerequisite for proposing, in the future, a comprehensive framework for the study of Latin politeness.

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