

## CL 191 (Winter 2014): Capstone Seminar in Classics

### *Ancient Mediterranean Languages*

(with a focus on Greek and Latin)

Wed., 2 – 4:50 (Pub. Aff. 2292)

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office hours: Tues. 2 – 3, Fri. 3:30 – 4:30 (or by appointment)

### Course description

Without Greek and Latin (and interactions between Greek- and Latin-speakers and speakers of other languages), there would be no “Classics” and no “Classical Civilization”. This course takes up questions like: Where did Greek and Latin come from, and how are they related to each other? What do we know about the actual pronunciation of Greek and Latin? What other languages were spoken in ancient Italy (answer: Etruscan, Oscan, Umbrian, North and South Picene, Lepontic, Messapic, and many more), and how did Latin wipe them all out? Where do the Greek and Roman alphabets come from? What do we know about “Mycenaean Greek” (the earliest form of Greek, written in the “Linear B” writing system)? Mycenaean Greek was spoken around the time of the Trojan War — but what language did the Trojans speak? While learning fundamental linguistic and sociolinguistic concepts as they relate to such questions, students will be enabled to explore the rich linguistic fabric of the ancient Mediterranean.

### Requirements

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|---|-----|
| • attendance/preparation/participation                | 10% |
| • in-class brief report(s) on assigned readings       | 20% |
| • in-class report on research project (Meetings 8-10) | 20% |
| • final paper + abstract (due Wed., 3/19)             | 50% |

### Texts/readings

- “textbooks” to buy: none!
- Some materials will be provided on the course web page (or are otherwise accessible online).
- There is an extensive list of books on reserve for the course at Powell Library, all on “two hours/overnight” reserve; see separate Reserve List (including information about online resources and some materials in the Powell and YRL Reference Reading Rooms).

### Assignments for Meeting 2

(1) [ASAP!] Fill out “Student information survey” (link on course web page, under “Week 1”)

(2) [everyone] Read Ch. 1 in Fortson, *Indo-European Language and Culture* (Powell Reserve); optional (but highly recommended): similar coverage in Watkins, *American Heritage Dictionary of IE Roots* (Powell and YRL Reference), pp. vi-xiv

(3) [individual reports] Based on Ch. 2 in Fortson (for each: read “Introduction”, pp. 18-19) —

- **Birtukan**: “Society” (pp. 19-24)
- **Sarah**: “Religion, Ritual, and Myth” (pp. 25-32)
- **Karena**: “Poetics” and “Personal Names” (pp. 32-9)
- **Jessica**: “Archaeology and the PIE Homeland Question” (pp. 39-49)

and highly recommended: similar coverage of much of this material in Watkins (as above in (2)), pp. xx-xxxiv

#### *Basic instructions for the reports*

- approx. 10 minutes ONLY! so you will need to compress the material and be selective; but do be sure to include some specific examples
- prepare a hard-copy handout to accompany your presentation (this will help you get through the material; but do NOT provide large blocks of prose that you simply read through)
- if you want, you may prepare a PowerPoint presentation — but in that case, you must *still* provide a hard-copy handout of some kind (which could simply be a printout of the PowerPoint slides)

#### **Schedule of meetings / topics (tentative! subject to change)**

1. [1/8] course intro.; Classical, Indo-European, and historical linguistics; relationship of Gk. and Lat., and IE background (beg.)
2. [1/15] historical linguistics and relationship of Gk. and Lat., and IE background (cont’d.)
3. [1/22] Gk. and Lat. phonetics/pronunciation; Gk. and Lat. morphosyntax
4. [1/29] Latin (“Latino-Faliscan”) and (Indo-European) Italic: Oscan, Umbrian, South Picene (and other Sabellic languages), and Venetic; other IE languages in ancient Italy  
(Leponitic, Messapic); non-IE languages in ancient Italy (Etruscan, North Picene)
5. [2/5] Greek, Greek dialects, and Mycenaean; “Minoan”, Cypro-Minoan, Semitic (and Sumerian), “Trojan”  
PAPER TOPIC CHOICE BY THIS DATE, AT LATEST!
6. [2/12] Gk. and Lat. vocabulary: native vs. borrowed (and the Mediterranean substrate); “Iberian” languages;  
ancient and modern etymology; bilingualism
7. [2/19] the alphabet and other ancient writing systems
8. [2/26] student research reports [time permitting: additional topics may be added for Meetings 8-10]
9. [3/5] student research reports

10. [3/12] student research reports

**final paper: due Wednesday, March 19th, 5 pm**

## **Abstracts**

### **Birtukan Belete, "Ancient Greek Dialects and the Development of the Koine"**

Koines arise from specific linguistic conditions where languages in contact with each other are related, or, in the case of Greek, are mutually intelligible dialects. The postdialectal form of Greek, the koine (from Greek *koinē glōssa* 'common language'), arose in a period of political and cultural globalization. The time of the Persian Wars ushered in a new form of Attic with influences from Ionic and other dialects, and the koine became the common language of the Greek empire established by Alexander the Great. It gradually replaced virtually all of the ancient dialects, spreading throughout the Hellenistic world and reaching as far as Egypt and Asia Minor. This paper begins with a focus on Greek prehistory, starting with the initial presence of Greek speakers in the Aegean and moving on to Linear B. The discussion of the four Greek dialects, Attic- Ionic, Arcado-Cypriot, Doric (or West-Greek), and Aeolic, offers insight into the background of the Greek language and its multifaceted nature. The focus then moves to the rise of the Attic dialect and the factors that played into Attic's supremacy. The subsequent de-Atticization that was required for the koine to fully develop is then explored, highlighting linguistic politics and pride. The last portion of the paper offers a more in-depth look at the development of the koine as well as certain phonological aspects of the common language. Then the significance of the koine's influence on Modern Greek and its ability to stay relevant is discussed.

### **Sarah Bishop, "The F/H Problem in Faliscan"**

Faliscan is an Indo-European language of the Italic branch. Together with Latin, it constitutes the Latino-Faliscan subgrouping. Needless to say, it is Latin's closest relative. In fact, the two are so similar that it is a point of contention whether or not Faliscan can be considered a language in its own right. One of the core differences between Latin and Faliscan is their different treatment of the Proto-Indo-European voiced aspirates, including the infamous Faliscan f/h problem: sometimes where an f is etymologically motivated one finds an h and vice versa. Countless theories have been proposed to account for this disparity. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate three of the most oft-repeated ones: an Etruscan influence, a sound change from f to h in initial position followed by hypercorrection, and phonetic confusion. Upon examining all the evidence, preference is shown for the ultimate.

### **Karena Craemer, "The Gift of Gab: An Analysis of the Historical Background and Linguistic Methodology Behind the Romanization of Etruria"**

Before the expansion of the Roman Empire, a rich and varied spread of indigenous languages flourished in ancient Italy, such as: Messapic, Venetic, Etruscan, Ligurian, Umbrian, Volscian, North and South Picene, etc. However, the Etruscan language, and in turn its distinct cultural and social identity, began to coalesce in the Protovillanovan period and showcased a unique spread of art, religion, and stage performance. In this study, I will analyze the process of Romanization from both a historical and linguistic background. However, the study of the historical factors and chronology behind the Romanization of Etruria inevitably raises many uncertainties. I will argue that the assimilation of

Etruscan towns and cities into the Roman Empire is simultaneously a result of an aggressive Roman expansionist policy and a voluntary adoption of Latin as a linguistic koine. In addition, a diachronic linguistic study of the extinction of Etruscan language casts this process as gradual and nuanced language shift. I will utilize epitaphs and bilinguals as localized evidence for this process of language shift. Indeed, a characterization of Romanization in Etruria calls for a holistic study that incorporates the complex linguistic, political, and economic factors behind the extended contact between the Etruscan and Roman civilizations.

#### **Jessica Figgins, "Latin *sum* and Oscan *súm*"**

This paper delivers a case study on the Latin verb *sum* and the Oscan verb *súm*, both of which mean 'to be.' I attempt to prove that both verbs are derived from the original Indo-European verb *\*h<sub>1</sub>ésmi*. This paper will also convey the impossibility that this verb formation is a result of Latin to Oscan borrowing. Using evidence from the archaic inscriptions found on the Garigliano bowl, this paper shows that archaic Latin and Oscan undergo similar linguistic innovations and that it would be wrong to speculate that any other theory of the origin of the *sum/súm* verb formation should be considered. This verb formation is a natural linguistic occurrence.

#### **Kat Ignatova, "Sex, Power, and the Theatre: An Analysis of Aristophanes' Female Voices"**

The female voice is largely absent from ancient Athenian literature. That makes it difficult to determine what the linguistic differences were between men and women, and how that reflected back on the way women spoke and handled themselves in that society. From this absence in literature, and from the writings of men on the subject, we know that women lived a very solitary and mostly uneducated lifestyle. They were not considered the equal of men, and were not considered to be citizens. It is in the theatre that the female voice makes an appearance. Granted, plays were written by men, performed by men, to an audience of men. The voice is warped and exaggerated, and shown through the filter of a comedic play. However, there are still differences. Men and women use different case endings, personal pronouns, and swear to different deities. There are even more subtle differences than that that can reveal even more about the female lifestyle. The use of obscenities was different for men and women. How the women referred to each other differed from how men referred to each other. Their use of rhetoric (or lack thereof) spoke much about the importance of the practice, and their silence in plays was just as important as what they spoke. These differences emphasize just how restricted the women were, and how absurd it was to see them out in public in the context of the play. This did not mean, however, that women did not hold any power. Rather, these plays reveal that women were powerful in the privacy of their home. They could influence their husbands with the tools they had — the running of the household and, most powerfully, how they acted in the marriage bed.

#### **Desiree Kawas, "The Mystery of the Etruscans"**

This research paper investigates the origin of the Etruscans which has been a topic of debate since antiquity. By examining two ancient theories in addition to several modern theories, I develop my own theory as to the pedigree of the Etruscans. The linguistic similarities between Etruscan, Lemnian and Raetic contribute to the analysis in terms of adding a level of complexity in determining the geographical origins of the Etruscans. After thoroughly considering each individual theory and bearing in mind the three way linguistic connection between Etruscan, Lemnian and Raetic, the best theory can be found in a hybrid of the Eastern Origins theory and the "formation process." The Eastern Origins theory has the

most linguistic evidence and Pallottino's "formation process" highlights the ethnos of the Etruscans rather than solely discussing the geographic origins. While my conclusion is one of the many theories concerning Etruscan origins, this exploration allowed for an enlightening study and perhaps a fresh interpretation on the mystery of the Etruscans.

**Kristie Keller**, "Lingua Aeterna: The Life of Vulgar Latin"

The thesis of this paper is that the Latin of the Classical literature of Ancient Rome only represented the artificial system of grammar to which the most educated authors and orators adhered. Vulgar Latin, spoken by everyone else in Rome, was not recorded until the late Empire. This living language was constantly undergoing innovation, and would be spoken until the ninth century of the Common Era when the reforms of the Emperor Charlemagne demonstrated that Latin had irretrievably diverged from the new language of Proto-Romance. With the aid of scholastic works on Classical and Romance linguistics, primary sources are analyzed for both intentional and unintentional representations of the elements of common language, in order to chart the linguistic processes occurring within Vulgar Latin. Main processes include phonetic evolution, inflectional morphology, syntax innovation, and vocabulary change. Where literary evidence is lacking, this paper reports on the scholars' published reconstructions of the intermediary forms that appeared between Classical Latin and Proto-Romance. By inquiring into the methods and motivations behind linguistic change, researchers achieve greater understanding of linguistic evolution as well as the reason for the constructs of contemporary languages.

**Anh Kiet Ngo**, "The Fall of the Roman Case System"

The Romance languages that we know today descended from Vulgar Latin, which was used by the common Roman people. Vulgar Latin's nouns had a relatively simplified case system when compared to Classical Latin, the more formal variety of Latin that is used in literature. In Vulgar Latin, the case system had undergone a process of decay over the years, even before a Roman Empire existed. The proposed causes of the decay in Vulgar Latin included a more regular word order, more frequent use of prepositions, phonetic changes, and functional confusions between the inflections. Regular word order was most likely not a significant cause when compared to the changes caused by prepositions and phonetic changes. Prepositions such as *de* and *ad* helped displace some case forms, such as the dative and genitive case. When phonetic changes, such as the loss of final consonant -m and length distinctions, arrived, they also caused further decay in the case system, especially in the singular case forms. The plural case forms, on the other hand, were more affected by functional confusions between the inflections. Amidst these functional confusions, the accusative case later rose into prominence. Some effects of the collapse of the case system included a reduction of the five declensions to three, as well as the disappearance of adjective case forms.

**Jennifer Seip**, "Religion in Proto Indo-European Cultures: Creation Myth and the Tripartite System"

Indo-European cultures are at their base harder to understand and discover because we have little physical documentation prior to Proto-Indo-European languages that evolved out of the original Indo-European culture. Through the reconstruction of words, a basic idea of religion can be established, but it is far from a complete picture. However, using the discovered method of comparative mythology in close relation to George Dumézil's discovery of the tripartite function system, a rudimentary understanding of the culture and religion of Indo-Europeans can be established. Although Dumézil's work is not perfect and there is much criticism and holes to be filled, there is a unique archaism of

Proto-Indo-Europeans that shows a tripartite system at its core; with the possibility of a fourth function coming out of the woodwork.