MULTILINGUALISM IN ANCIENT CONTEXTS

Perspectives from
Ancient Near Eastern
and Early Christian
Contexts

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PAULINE MULTILINGUALISM IN IMPERIAL TIMES

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11.1 INTRODUCTION

Paul embodied multilingualism as a Jew that was born into a Greek-speaking world under Roman control. The terms ‘Jew’, ‘Greek’, and ‘Roman’ had no modernist nation-state or nationalist connections, but as socio-political or socio-cultural qualifiers were thought to have had some linguistic associations.¹ Even so, these qualifiers did not primarily reflect particular, singular languages and with Hellenism still in place, the reach of Greek crossed these and many other socio-cultural boundaries. Evidence also suggests the presence of a much wider range of languages at the time, with different groups and peoples across the ancient Mediterranean having spoken a variety of languages. James Adams has noted how the Romans had complete disregard and even open contempt for languages other than Greek, and argues that after imperial Rome’s takeover of territories, vernacular language speakers were under severe pressure to adopt either Latin or Greek.²

The ancient world had the Macedonians – King Philip II, and Alexander the Great in particular – to thank or to blame, depending on perspective, for a world dominated by Greek.³ Even the relatively rapid rise to power of the Roman Republic turned Empire shortly before the time of the New Testament did not overturn the widespread use of Greek across the imperial domain, with perhaps a bilingual more than multilingual world as the result during New Testament times.⁴ The dominance of the languages of Greek and Latin during the 1st century CE meant that they reflected the contemporary world’s *lingua franca* and the imperial context’s official language, even if they did

- 1 The past political prevalence of touting the one nation, one language model has brought about much uneasiness and theoretical and other challenges of this mantra; today, perhaps understandable in a time where populism is on the rise with its all too easy equations between language and indigeneity, the mantra is again brought into play in different parts of the world.
- 2 James N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 759.
- 3 Languages spread by war, conquest, and colonisation, but as John C. Maher, *Multilingualism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 19–31, explains, unless the other three components of sustainment (e.g., by government or military), establishment (shifting to become a vernacular) and benefit (providing social advantage) also come into play, languages may not last.
- 4 Scholars tend to extend the use of bilingualism so that it borders on or even becomes similar to multilingualism. Bilingualism is not to be confused with *diglossia*, which amounts to a strong, functional compartmentalisation of varieties of a particular language, unlike what is generally the case with bilingual interactions; see, e.g., Alex Mullen, “Introduction. Multiple Languages, Multiple Identities”, in *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds*, eds. Alex Mullen & Patrick James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 23–4; also Hughson T. Ong, *The Multilingual Jesus and the Sociolinguistic World of the New Testament*, Linguistic Biblical Studies 12 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 102. Mullen, “Introduction”, 26, suggests that although ancient society provides little evidence of diglossic communities with strict linguistic domain divisions, the high and low linguistic varieties can still be useful for identifying varieties of prestige or function.

not always co-exist peacefully. In this discussion, I explore the significance of these intersecting linguistic lines for making sense of multilingual elements in the Pauline letters in the imperial context, trying to show the value of such work by focussing on a few themes in the Galatians letter.

11.2 MULTILINGUALISM: BEYOND HYBRIDITY? MODERN AND ANCIENT?

The explosion of work on bilingualism in general since the early 1980s was soon matched by similar studies in the classics.⁵ Multilingualism, rather than monolingualism, has been the norm in human societies, past and present.⁶ Although Mullen does not want to deny the sociolinguistic importance of the context-specific nature of language, she nevertheless holds that across contexts and time, “bilingual phenomena attested are created through analogous linguistic interactions and are representative of similar human processes”.⁷ It is appropriate to speak, then, of *modern* bilingualism theory only in as far as such theorisation is recent, and in fact, some would say, a developing enterprise.⁸ Bilingualism or multilingualism can be understood as “a social situation involving groups of communities who communicate, with varying proficiency, in more than one language, in addition to a national or standard language”.

5 For short introductions to the notion and theoretical contents of multilingualism, see, e.g., Tej K. Bhatia & William C. Richie, *The Handbook of Bilingualism and Multilingualism*, 2nd Ed. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013); Maher, *Multilingualism*; Marilyn Martin-Jones, Adrian Blackledge, Angela Creese, *The Routledge Handbook of Multilingualism*, Routledge Handbooks in Applied Linguistics (London/New York: Routledge, 2012); and Kristine Horner & Jean-Jacques Weber, *Introducing Multilingualism: A Social Approach* (London/New York: Routledge, 2012). For multilingualism in the Greek and Roman worlds, see e.g. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*; James N. Adams, Mark Janse & Simon Swain, *Bilingualism in Ancient Society: Language Contact and the Written Text* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Alex Mullen & Patrick James, *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), and even Michaela Bauks, Wayne Horowitz & Armin Lange, *Between Text and Text: The Hermeneutics of Intertextuality in Ancient Cultures and Their Afterlife in Medieval and Modern Times*, Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplements 6 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013); for Palestine, see, e.g., Hughson T. Ong *The Multilingual Jesus*.

6 The term ‘multilingual’ is anaphoric and needs to be complemented with ‘monolingual’ to be understood. However, this gives rise to conceiving of the two as binaries, which is untenable: a language is never a stable, independent, and single entity, and always contains a huge variety of different influences. Language is a “compound of accretions with varieties and borrowings from other languages and peoples”, Maher, *Multilingualism*, 16-7.

7 Mullen, “Introduction”, 5.

8 As the Linguistic Society of America points out, “The basic notion underlying sociolinguistics is quite simple: Language use symbolically represents fundamental dimensions of social behavior and human interaction. The notion is simple, but the ways in which language reflects behavior can often be complex and subtle. Furthermore, the relationship between language and society affects a wide range of encounters – from broadly based international relations to narrowly defined interpersonal relationships.” Available at: <https://www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/sociolinguistics> (Accessed 20 September 2019).

This societal multilingualism can, of course, include also individual multilingualism (then mostly called, bilingualism) when it refers to a person's ability to use two (or more) languages, separately or mixed, and to varying degrees of competence.

Multilingualism is often aligned with multiculturalism, “the existence and acceptance of multiple cultural traditions and practices within a community”.⁹ As studied in sociolinguistics or the sociology of language, multilingualism includes associated concerns such as minority languages, language death and revitalisation, language, identity and nationalism, multilingual cities and communities, language education, and language planning. Multilingualism concerns both past and present, and is found in all forms of language, speaking and writing and sign language.¹⁰ Yet, multilingual awareness is not only about the plurality of languages, but “is to know that language comprises a mosaic of speech from family and friends, songs and rituals, the speech of my town, and many past generations”.¹¹ Moreover, understanding language as a semiotic system implies that the traditional notion of “meaning making in text” as only a matter of language in the narrow sense, becomes untenable. Texts are not mere language strings, but complex semiotic processes involving various interlinking semiotic systems, intricate rhetorical strategies, and a dynamic relationship with their related contexts.¹²

The notion of language as a semiotic system derives from Halliday's sociolinguistic work, who pointed out many years ago that language is the creator and creature of human society, a social semiotic system, meaning that “language *actively symbolizes* the social system, representing metaphorically in its patterns of variation the variation that characterizes human cultures”.¹³ This means that the study of language as a social and cultural phenomenon has to consider the social context in which communication takes place. This has led some scholars to study cultures as languages and languages as cultures.¹⁴ “Languages, whether they take verbal or other cultural forms, offer sets of

9 Maher, *Multilingualism*, 3. For some of the concerns raised about multiculturalism as divisive and obstructive to harmonious life, and praise for its valuing of differences between people and communities, see Maher *Multilingualism*, 41-6.

10 While multilingual persons can be said to have access to various language “repertoires”, it is not so that they have mastered multiple languages but rather they can use different languages for different functions in different contexts (Maher, *Multilingualism*, 5.)

11 Maher, *Multilingualism*, 18.

12 Sonja Starc, Carys Jones & Arianna Maiorani, “Introduction”, in *Meaning Making in Text*, eds. Sonja Starc, Carys Jones, & Arianna Maiorani (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 3.

13 Michael A.K. Halliday, *Language as Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*, Reprint, (London: Arnold, 1979), 3.

14 Robin Osborne, “Cultures as Languages and Languages as Cultures”, in *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds*, eds. Alex Mullen & Patrick James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 317-4.

modifiable conventions that individuals employ as they present themselves to a wider world.”¹⁵ However, caution is advised when using languages in relation to culture, since, as Hannerz has warned, “linguistic sources of inspiration have not always served cultural analysis well, and whenever one takes an intellectual ride on a metaphor, it is essential that one knows where to get off”.¹⁶

Picking up on these and other developments, scholars of antiquity have started to argue against an understanding of culture as unitary or a zero-sum game, which in the case of the Roman imperial context would imply an understanding of the interplay of Greek and Roman presences in the ancient world as two separate blocks or forces. In the intermingling into a hybrid of sorts, colonialisng acculturation can be portrayed either as positive, civilising the savage, or as negative, suppressing native traditions through external homogenising power; but even when an existing or native culture is accorded an active role, it is seen to be assumed in and displaced by the new or hybrid.¹⁷ Beyond such presupposed, almost compulsory hybridity, multilingualism points towards other options, such as that communities upheld different culture-systems at the same time, fully aware of the differences, and code-switched between them¹⁸ – especially in imperial times.¹⁹

15 Osborne, “Cultures as Languages and Languages as Cultures”, 333.

16 Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 264. Language goes beyond human communication, as a form of human interaction, and is found in a particular cultural format, which can lead to the nurturing of the own while valuing the Other with othering. Wallace-Hadrill *Rome’s Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 17, 97 notes, though, that material culture is as protean as language or religion, not single, fixed, ascribed or bounded; nevertheless, one should not leap from language to material culture.

17 “Acculturation cannot be taken as an either/or process whereby individual aspects of ‘native’ culture either are or are not replaced by elements of Roman culture. The interest lies rather in understanding the dialectic of appropriation by which cultural goods and traits of the conquering power are taken on by the conquered to serve specific ends, and may add reciprocally the process whereby the conquering power takes over traits from the conquered to accommodate conquest.” See Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome’s Cultural Revolution*, 10.

18 Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome’s Cultural Revolution*, 27-8.

19 For a fuller account of the debate about the relation between Hellenisation and Romanisation, see, e.g., Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome’s Cultural Revolution*, 10-28, who also links up with Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. Alan Shapiro (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), to explain how the early Roman Empire transformed the visual language of the world of imagery through the Empire’s exchange of the Hellenistic for a classical idiom – all of which was a result of the change in Roman ideology undergirding the imperial order. Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome’s Cultural Revolution*, 22, notes also that a Thesaurus Linguae Graecae search on ἑλληνίζειν, ἑλληνιστής and ἑλληνισμός shows that these words are used as active and intransitive: “‘hellenising’ is what the foreign Greek-speaker does for himself, not something that he does to others, or that is done to him.

11.3 IMPERIAL CONCERNS AND ANXIETIES

The study of language in empire, its roles and involvement in control, is a topic of its own, but some remarks are in order here, since Empire co-constituted the context of the Pauline letters and since it exerted a decidedly linguistic impact, too. A purposefully controlled political setting, such as a political empire, may be believed to render a monolingual environment, but history shows that this conclusion is not inevitable and, in fact, at times unwarranted.²⁰ Notwithstanding the centripetal force of empire, the incorporation and amalgamation of various groups, through coercion or voluntarily, implied a plurality of languages also within the larger socio-political structures. “Annexation is unstable. The fracture of the multilingual Roman Empire [...] demonstrates this.”²¹ The resultant ambiguities that are necessarily involved in such ostensibly mono-linguistic settings is probably nowhere better illustrated than in the 1st-century Roman imperial, Hellenistic world.

To some extent, the popularity of Greek above Latin can be explained by Mufwene’s analysis of the language’s discontinuation, namely that indigenous communities in settlement colonies had low ethnolinguistic vitality in contrast to indigenous communities in exploitation colonies who had higher ethnolinguistic vitality.²² In the Roman Empire, the expectation was that Roman citizens, even if they could speak Greek, should learn Latin, and evidence suggests that at least for a certain period documents were produced in Latin even if the intended recipients did not know the language.²³ However, the anomalous position of Greek amidst the 1st-century Roman domination probably underlines the usefulness and dangers of a *lingua franca*, especially in an age of imperialism. The reach of Greek in the vastness and recesses of the Hellenistic world probably contributed to the Romans’ mixed feelings about Greek. Romans admired Greek culture and language but using it in public and especially

20 See, e.g., the contribution of Jonker in this volume who observes the same with reference to the Persian Empire.

21 Maher, *Multilingualism*, 23. “The Roman army was undoubtedly the most potent force during the Roman Empire behind the learning of Latin by speakers of Greek and vernacular languages, and behind the consequent spread of bilingualism” (Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 761).

22 While his analysis is useful, Mullen points out that Mufwene’s claim in “Language Birth and Death”, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33/1 (2004): 214, that local languages in the Empire’s western provinces prevailed and that Latin took hold only when the Romans left, does not explain either the disappearance of western indigenous languages or the wide and deep penetration of Latin even in the absence of widespread education or its official regulatory advocacy. Mullen also takes issue with Mufwene’s rather simplistic binary of settlement and exploitation colonies, given the extent of decentralised local power and control which varied widely, spatially and temporally. See Mullen, “Introduction”, 28.

23 Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 758.

where Greeks attended, was seen as humiliating, and could even be construed as an act of deference flying in the face of Roman political dominance.²⁴

Such ambiguities have been addressed in postcolonial work. Reassessing the relations between coloniser and colonised, critics such as Bhabha have invoked the notion of hybridity to express the dynamics at work in such contexts. Moving away from monolithic images, of destructive colonisers imposing their own cultures, and of merely passive or stubbornly resistant colonised peoples, the notion of ‘hybridity’ assists in recovering the subaltern voice (Spivak). Postcolonial hybridity accounts for the colonised subject’s simultaneous yet ambivalent appropriation and subversion of colonist cultures.²⁵ Creolisation can be an example of such hybridity. In linguistics, creolisation is typically used for processes through which a pidgin, the grammatically simplified means of communication that develops between two or more groups that do not have a language in common, become a creole.²⁶ “The cultural processes of creolization are not simply a matter of constant pressure from the center towards the periphery, but a much more creative interplay [...]. [C]reole languages are formed as unique combinations and creations out of the interactions between languages in these various dimensions.”²⁷ Creolisation, however, with its swift blend of diverse languages and cultures, is not an altogether useful understanding of romanisation.²⁸

The adage that “a language is a dialect with an army and a navy”,²⁹ illustrates the involvement of power and politics with language, but also how popular perception

24 Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 757. “In the context of trade, they were happy to moderate their language use to fit in with their partners, but in more political contexts Latin could be forced on Greeks as a symbolic gesture” (Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 14). For detail on Pompeian graffiti, both Greek transliterated into Latin characters and Latin transliterated into Greek, see Kristina Milnor, *Graffiti and the Literary Landscape in Roman Pompeii* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 19; for similar graffiti in Herculaneum, see Rebecca R. Benefiel & Holly M. Sypniewski, “The Greek Graffiti of Herculaneum”, *American Journal of Archaeology*, 122/2 (2018): 209.

25 Not to mention that the colonising or imperialising experience defined the colonised or imperial subjects as much as the colonisers or imperial agents. Unfortunately, it is at this point that culture as hybrid in postcolonial thinking is misunderstood, with too little attention for the notion of a third space and the all too often simplistic view of amalgamation of two or more entities.

26 ‘Creole’ originally referred to having been born in a location different from where the parents hail, but came to denote mixed cultures, and ‘creolisation’ to the meeting and mixing of cultures. Rather than using the term indiscriminately for cultural contact, creolisation is best reserved for distinctive languages and cultures. “Pidgins, creoles and bilingual mixed languages are indeed extremely rarely attested for the Roman world”, see, e.g., Mullen, “Introduction”, 30.

27 Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity*, 265.

28 See also Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome’s Cultural Revolution*, 11-3, for a longer argument for not seeing romanisation as (a form of) creolisation.

29 Max Weinreich in Maher, *Multilingualism*, 8.

accords status and value. Language choice and attitudes can never be disconnected from political arrangements, and in multilingual settings such arrangements include relations of power, language ideologies, and interlocutors' views of their own and others' identities.³⁰ This claim is certainly true of the New Testament (NT) documents as well, and calls for our attention to the Roman imperial context with its many linguistic and other ambiguities. The historically expected correlation between political (or religious) expansion drives and a monolingual insistence, fails in the case of the Roman Empire which was not monolingual in its administration and generally operated in two languages, Latin and Greek.³¹ Therefore, rather than thinking of the Empire as a battleground of winners and losers, or as a context of simple oppression and victimisation – not discounting the skewed situation and accompanying inequalities – a more nuanced understanding is required. “The Roman empire becomes a great ‘middle ground’, not simply of the ‘Roman’ versus the ‘other’ (in various degrees assimilated to Rome), but an enormous multi-sided exchange across a vast territory, in which ‘influence came from everywhere and flowed to everywhere.’”³² The Roman Empire, then, notwithstanding its linguistic preference for Latin and Greek, contributed rather than distracted from the contemporary multilingual environment, from which a 1st-century Jewish author could not disentangle himself.

11.4 MULTILINGUAL PAUL AND THE LXX: GALATIANS

Some multilingual situations in the NT are impossible to miss, such as the triple language (γεγραμμένον Ἑβραϊστί, Ῥωμαϊστί, Ἑλληνιστί) inscription on the cross of Jesus in John 19:20; or the glossolalia described in Acts 2:4 (λαλεῖν ἑτέραις γλώσσαις) or referenced in 1 Corinthians 12:30 (γλώσσαις λαλοῦσιν; also 14:5, 6, 18, 23, 27, 40). Another instance is Paul, formerly known as Saul as far as Acts is concerned (Ac 13:9), who can be said to have embodied multilingualism.³³ From the beginning, Paul's life was characterised by multilingualism, even beyond his changed or code-switched name, with its former version having regal connotations in contrast to the later literally

30 Aneta Pavlenko & Adrian Blackledge, “Introduction: New Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Negotiation of Identities in Multilingual Contexts”, in *Negotiation of Identities in Multilingual Contexts*, eds. Aneta Pavlenko & Adrian Blackledge, Bilingual Education and Bilingualism 45 (Clevedon and Buffalo: Multilingual Matters, 2004), 1.

31 “What obviously made Greek acceptable was its prominent place in the upper-class Roman education system, and the prestige which it had taken on through its admired literature” (Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 757-8.)

32 Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution*, 13.

33 Various studies have appeared in the past that explore Paul's multicultural identity; see, e.g., Stanley Porter, *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, Pauline Studies 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2009); and Murray J. Smith “Paul in the Twenty-First Century”, in *All Things to All Cultures: Paul among Jews, Greeks and Romans*, eds. M. Harding & A. Nobbs (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 1-33.

belittling version (*paulus* in Latin meaning small or little).³⁴ In all likelihood, Paul was a polyglot, as suggested by his social (rather than geographical) locations. His self-(ac)claimed Jewish heritage, “[c]ircumcised on the eighth day, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrew parentage, in observance of the law a Pharisee” (Ph 3:5),³⁵ probably meant that he grew up with Hebrew.³⁶ His letters clearly show his proficiency in Greek as well, and circumstantial evidence³⁷ and grammatical and lexical Latinisms in his letters³⁸ suggest he also knew Latin.³⁹

11.4.1 Multilingual Paul

Paul’s own claims and aspirations to be a Jew to the Jews and to others as they are (1 Cor 9:19-23) in order to “by all means save some” (ἵνα πάντως τινὰς σώσω, 9:22) and “doing it all for the sake of the gospel so as to share in it” (πάντα δὲ ποιῶ διὰ τὸ

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- 34 Although “[p]ersonal names are hardly the most secure indicators of the ethnicity or first language of an individual” (Trevor Evans, “Complaints of the Natives in a Greek Dress The Zenon Archive and the Problem of Egyptian Interference”, in *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds*, eds. Alex Mullen & Patrick James [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012], 108), and Paul did not expand on his name, nor gave the impression of being bothered to use Paul, it will not receive further attention here. He never mentions his Jewish name in his letters, but always identifies himself as Paul (e.g., 1 Thes 1:1; 2:18; Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1, 12-13; etc). This is important since names were in the ancient era markers of identity. For Paul’s name in Acts, see, e.g., T.J. Leary “Paul’s Improper Name”, *New Testament Studies*, 38/3 (1992): 467-9. More generally, see, e.g., Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 752-53. Popular theological explanations for Paul’s name focus on his ostensible humble demeanour, or pragmatic reasons of being recognisable, or even countering anti-Judaic sentiment.
- 35 See also Rom 11, and the bigger debate initiated particularly by the “Paul in Judaism”-approach as one of the most recent “perspectives” on the Pauline letters.
- 36 He is reported to have been born and bred in Tarsus, Cilicia (Ac 9:11; 21:39; 22:3; cf. 9:30; 11:25) and educated in Jerusalem (Ac 22:3). Since the goals of ancient historiography may not align in all respects with modern expectations regarding notions of accuracy and engagement with sources and given the Acts of the Apostles’ rhetorical purpose in aligning Paul much closer with Jerusalem than what is evident in the Pauline letters, the usefulness of Acts for construing a Pauline biography has been questioned. See, e.g., Hans Dieter Betz, “Paul (Person)”, *Anchor Bible Dictionary* 5:186. See also below for Paul’s Hebrew code-switching.
- 37 At best, the circumstantial evidence for the claim that Paul could and did in fact speak Latin, relates to his travel itinerary to the Latin-speaking province of Illyricum, and his visits to cities where Latin was probably spoken such as Lydia, Pisidian Antioch, Philippi, Corinth, Caesarea Maritima and Rome.
- 38 Stanley Porter “Did Paul Speak Latin?” in *Paul: Jew, Greek, and Roman*, Pauline Studies 5, ed. Stanley E. Porter (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 303-6, identifies nine grammatical Latinisms in the Pauline letters: the use of Greek Perfect for the Aorist (e.g., 2 Cor 1:9; 2:13; 11:25); relative clause begins sentence or is resolved into (καὶ) οὗτος (Gal 2:10; 4:24); use of πρό specifying time (e.g., 2 Cor 12:2); use of ἀπό after φυλάσσω and other verbs of fearing (e.g., 2 Thes 3:3); restrictive conclusion with use of ἵνα μή (e.g., 2 Cor 2:5); the verb τίθημι or ἵστημι with ἐν (e.g. Rom 9:33; 1 Cor 7:37); preposition σύν for καί (e.g. 1 Cor 16:9); use of Greek dative for the Latin *dativus commode* (e.g. Rom 6:10, 20); ἐκ (τοῦ) μέσου αἶρειν = *de medio tollere* (e.g. 1 Cor 5:2). Lexical Latinisms include θριαμβεύω (2 Cor 2:14; cf. Col 2:15); μάκελλον (1 Cor 10:25); πραιτώριον (Phil 3:3); also μεμβράνα (2 Tim 4:13) and φελόνης (2 Tim 4:13).
- 39 Porter, “Did Paul Speak Latin?” 289-305.

εὐαγγέλιον, ἵνα συγκοινωνὸς αὐτοῦ γένωμαι, 9:23) had linguistic implications. His remarks in 1 Corinthians 9 and elsewhere show his awareness of multiple identities amongst his addressees, but more importantly, of his attempts to negotiate his own identity in a pluralist setting. As has been argued, “bilinguals of different types are often particularly aware of the conflicts of identity determined by their belonging to more than one speech community”,⁴⁰ and Paul seems particularly keen not to create the impression of favouring any particular group above the other. After all, bilingualism is the one element that emerges as part of the heuristic value of analysing boundaries.⁴¹

If an account such as 1 Corinthians 9 can be taken as indication of Paul’s explicit multilingualism, and given what more is known about Paul, he exhibited what linguists would call stable multilingualism, that is, “the use of two or more languages [...] maintained within a single community over a long period of time”.⁴² Stable multilingualism is associated with language maintenance, unlike its opposite form of unstable multilingualism where a shift towards a single language results in the loss of others.⁴³ Stable multi- or bilingualism can exist in various situations, such as where specific groups in the community or specific areas of use, such as domestic or workplace or business, demand a particular language. “Stable bilingualism therefore may rely upon the existence of appropriate social settings and social opportunities for each maintained language. In the case of long-term stable multilingualism, one may find convergence effects or ‘metatypy’, where the languages used alongside each other begin to show similarities in underlying grammatical structures.”⁴⁴ Paul’s stable multilingualism is probably best seen in the scope and nature of his use of the LXX.

11.4.2 Paul and the LXX (Septuagint)

A long-standing matter of much debate in Paul’s use of the LXX relates to the extent to which his scriptural invocation was a personal predilection or brought on by the audiences he anticipated for his letters. Paul’s use of the LXX can hardly be cited as indicative of the 1st-century death of Hebrew as a language, but rather attests to the

40 Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language*, 751-2.

41 Annette Weissenrieder, “Introduction”, in *Borders: Terminologies, Ideologies, and Performances*, ed. Annette Weissenrieder (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 18-9.

42 James Clackson, “Language Maintenance and Language Shift in the Mediterranean World during the Roman Empire”, in *Multilingualism in the Graeco-Roman Worlds*, eds. Alex Mullen & Patrick James (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 37.

43 “Situations of unstable multilingualism may arise (but do not have to) when two or more languages are used in similar social situations, or for the same purposes by the same speaker; in many cases there is no advantage to the speaker in using the language that affords less social, political or economic leverage, and the language is lost.” See Clackson, “Language Maintenance and Language Shift”, 37.

44 Ibid.

prevalence of Greek.⁴⁵ However, the question remains why Paul wrote in Greek? Was this only for pragmatic reasons or was there more to it. As Mullen recognises, “[f]or bilinguals, choice of language can be significant for presentations of identity and intergroup or interpersonal relations”.⁴⁶ The extent of Hellenisation and its impact on Jewish traditions, culture, and language was vast and is difficult to fathom, and probably most visible in the language in which Second Temple Jews read their Scriptures.⁴⁷ Indications are that the ethnolinguistic vitality of Jews in the ancient Mediterranean world of the 1st century declined to such an extent, that they engaged their scriptures by means of the Greek-translated LXX.⁴⁸ Paul is a good example of this trend since, although his training was in the Jewish tradition, he predominantly used the LXX tradition(s) and not the pre-Masoretic text when quoting from or alluding to Israel’s Scriptures.⁴⁹ Sarna goes further and contends that with the expansion of Hellenism across the 1st-century world, the modus of reading the Hebrew Bible amongst the Jews changed to one of studying the Bible: “The flood tides of Hellenism engulfed the ancient Near Eastern world and transformed its civilisation, so that the cultural environment that produced the Hebrew Bible was no longer familiar to the reader.”⁵⁰

45 See Mufwene, “Language Birth and Death”, 201–22, who cautions with regard to the use of the terms language birth and death; he insists on thinking of language as species rather than organism, and that as much as language birth is an unpredictable, protracted process spanning many generations, so language death is also a protracted process that does not affect all speakers simultaneously or to similar extent.

46 Mullen, “Introduction. Multiple Languages, Multiple Identities”, 23.

47 The origin of the Greek translation of the Scriptures of Israel is generally identified as the large Jewish community of Alexandria in Egypt; see Mogens Müller, “The Septuagint as the Bible of the New Testament Church”, *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*, 7/2 (1993): 199. It is generally accepted that the Jesus followers, in Jewish communities and outside these communities, used the LXX (Niels Peter Lemche, “The Old Testament – a Hellenistic Book?” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*, 7/2 [1993]: 190), and that it was the most obvious source used by New Testament writers (Schuyler Brown, *The Origins of Christianity. A Historical Introduction to the New Testament*, eds. Peter R. Ackroyd & Graham N. Stanton [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984], 30; Hermann von Lips, “Paulus und die Tradition. Zitierung von Schriftworten, Herrenworten und urchristlichen Traditionen”, *Verkündigung und Forschung*, 36/2 [1991]: 33).

48 “The vitality of an ethnolinguistic group is that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and collective entity within the intergroup setting. The higher the ethnolinguistic vitality attached to a speech community, the more likely its language will be maintained; the lower, the more likely shift will occur” (Mullen, “Introduction”, 26).

49 See Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums. Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus*, ed. Johannes Wallman (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), 33, for a complete list of LXX books from which Paul quotes, including the number of times he used each of those: Isa 28, Ps 20, Genesis and Deuteronomy with 15 times each; no other books are quoted more than five times. The situation is somewhat more complex, of course, when allusions or even echoes are to be considered as well. The scholarly debate regarding Paul possibly having quoted from a pre-Masoretic text, or different versions of the LXX, or from either at different instances, and so forth, will not be engaged here. For further discussion, see the contribution of Nel in this volume.

50 Nahum M. Sarna, “The Authority and Interpretation of Scripture in Jewish Tradition”, in

The study of the LXX's origins, the different traditions, and their transmission fit right into a multilingual agenda; however, our focus here is much more contained, and will look into a tiny part of the reception history of the LXX, namely its use in the Pauline letters, doing so from the perspective of multilingualism. To conclusively identify the exact composition of the LXX in the 1st century CE is virtually impossible. "What we (naively) call the Septuagint, or LXX, is really a collection of various translations done at different times by different people who had differing skills and different approaches."⁵¹ Scholars also refer to the "diversity of the first century Greek OT text" which is documented in some of the Qumran writings, and is evidenced in the surviving Old Latin translation fragments.⁵² The long process of textual transmission of the LXX, which by Paul's time probably already existed for the best part of three centuries, further complicates the picture. The transmission process was affected by major revisions and even competing Greek translations in the form of competing recensions of the LXX by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, produced in the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE, as well as other later versions.⁵³ It is exactly this history of development of the LXX traditions that further attest to its multilingual originating environment, as much as to the prevalence of Greek.

It appears that the guiding principle in the LXX translations was not so much to remain true to the original intent and purposes of the earliest forms of the tradition, but to contextualise the translation in its new setting or "to implement the actual meaning of the text".⁵⁴ Repeating the commonplace that to translate is to interpret, Müller adds that in the case of the LXX this necessity was made a virtue: the Hebrew Bible was

Understanding Scripture. Explorations of Jewish and Christian Traditions of Interpretation, Studies in Judaism and Christianity, eds. Clemens Thoma & Michael Wyschogrod (A Stimulus Book) (Mahwah: Paulist, 1987), 9.

51 Moises Silva, "Old Testament in Paul", *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, 632.

52 E.g., Craig A. Evans, *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 73-5. See also the contributions of Ralph W. Klein, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament. The Septuagint after Qumran*, ed. Gene M. Tucker (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 10-26; Mogens Müller, "Hebraica Sive Graeca Veritas. The Jewish Bible at the Time of the New Testament and the Christian Bible", *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*, 3/2 (1989): 67 note 28; Müller, "The Septuagint as the Bible of the New Testament Church", 197, in this regard.

53 Klein, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament. The Septuagint after Qumran*, 5-6; Ferdinand E. Deist, ed., *Towards the Text of the Old Testament*, trans. Walter K. Winckler (Pretoria: NG Kerkboekhandel Transvaal, 1978), 159-64, 170-3; Emanuel Tov, "Jewish Greek Scriptures", in *Early Judaism and Its Modern Interpreters*, The Bible and Its Modern Interpreters 3, eds. Robert A. Kraft & George W.E. Nickelsburg, (Philadelphia/Atlanta: Fortress Press/Scholars Press, 1986), 229-31; Evans, *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*, 73-5; Silva, "Old Testament in Paul", 632. For a brief summary of different source theories, see Tov "Jewish Greek Scriptures", 224-5.

54 Müller, "The Septuagint as the Bible of the New Testament Church", 203.

Hellenised.⁵⁵ Calvin Roetzel similarly contends that the “Hellenistic spirit influenced the translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek” and argues that the Greek of the LXX introduced significant Hellenistic understandings of Jewish ideas as expressed in Hebrew, in at least three areas: the view of God (such as the disappearance of the personal name); the understanding of the law (the Greek νόμος as code which governs community life or an individual’s conduct, is at odds with תורה and its notions of instruction or guidance); and the perception of faith (the Hebrew distinction between reliability or faithfulness and faith or belief is not found in the LXX).⁵⁶ Considering the importance of linguistic movements such as the LXX for the Pauline letters, is one way to answer Mullen’s question, “to what extent applying the modern theory of bilingualism to the ancient world is fashionable but not really practicable”.⁵⁷ Paul’s use of the LXX underlines the importance of multilingualism, framed in an imperial setting, for understanding the 1st-century Mediterranean world.⁵⁸

11.4.3 Galatians: Language, Gender, and Empire

Big and small influences give rise to multilingualism, with on the one hand social, religious, and economic forces contributing to the transmission of languages from one speech community to another, but on the other hand, language transmission is sometimes the result of shared or converging interests amongst communities or people. Social identification plays an important role, as it affects with whom people want to identify and how closely.⁵⁹ An interesting situation is at hand in the letter to the Galatians, where a proper contest about shared interests seems to be at work. Paul’s concerns are hardly linguistic in the strict sense, but his arguments are certainly multilingually inflected. Although it is often difficult if not impossible to reconstruct the intentionality or bilingual aptitude of authors,⁶⁰ the Galatians letter (like other Pauline letters) provide indications of a skilful, if not deliberate, bilingual touch – two examples must suffice.

55 Müller refers in particular to the translation of יהוה with κύριος, and the difference in the order of the books in the LXX.

56 Calvin Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul. Conversations in Context*, 2nd Ed. (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 7-9.

57 “Introduction. Multiple Languages, Multiple Identities”, 28. She suggests that the answer may lie in making use of multidisciplinary approaches and considering all available evidence. Some scholars have indeed engaged, besides linguistics, also epigraphy, history and archaeology, e.g., Adams, Janse & Swain, *Bilingualism in Ancient Society*; Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome’s Cultural Revolution*.

58 Kathy Ehrensperger, “Speaking Greek under Rome: Paul, the Power of Language and the Language of Power”, *Neotestamentica*, 46/1 (2012): 9-28 argues that Paul’s use of Greek was not tantamount to the inscription of domination and subordination.

59 Maher, *Multilingualism*, 21.

60 Mullen, “Introduction”, 20.

11.4.3.1 Contested Claims: Access to Tradition

Paul's bold claim for a Jewish identity, Ἡμεῖς φύσει Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἔθνων ἁμαρτωλοί (Gal 2:15 – We ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners) sets the scene for his argument. In the letter, Paul castigates the receivers for being ignorant or stupid (Gal 3:1), having forsaken what they have learned from him when he visited them, yet he did not disassociate himself from them. In fact, he describes his relationship with them and his anguish for them as though he is their mother (Gal 4:19). While much has been made of the gender and theological implications of his claim,⁶¹ the linguistic sentiment also should not escape our notice. “Women's influence in a speech community and their attitude towards language change, whether conservative (encouraging maintenance) or innovative (encouraging shift), can have a significant impact on whether a language survives or is lost.”⁶² Almost to drive a point home, Paul cites from the Scriptures (Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27; Gen 21:10 in Gal 4:30), and allegorises the gist of Abraham's children and their mothers.⁶³ In his argumentation, he took up and reinvented in Greek, a Jewish narrative originally narrated in Hebrew. Moreover, and especially given the relation between language and gender, the role of body language cannot be ignored.⁶⁴ While Paul's bodily posture cannot be known, his linguistic demeanour is clear: by replacing his usual thanksgiving with some cursing (Gal 1:6-10), calling them stupid (3:1), and making a crass equation between circumcision and castration (5:12), to name a few, he communicated his anger and frustration with their actions.⁶⁵

As was his custom, Paul did not mention the Empire explicitly in Galatians, but its presence is felt in many ways. To name one, the Roman Empire exerted its power and

61 E.g., Beverly R. Gaventa, “The Maternity of Paul: An Exegetical Study of Galatians 4:19”, in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in John & Paul. In Honor of J Louis Martyn*, eds. Robert T. Fortna & Beverly R. Gaventa (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 189-201; Beverly R. Gaventa, “Our Mother St. Paul: Toward the Recovery of a Neglected Theme”, *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, 17/1 (1996): 29-44.

62 Mullen, “Introduction”, 26-7; and as Clackson, “Language Maintenance and Language Shift in the Mediterranean World during the Roman Empire”, 57, hold more generally, “The Egyptian situation, where some women tend to prefer the vernacular to Greek at some times and in some places, chimes well with other more superficial evidence for the maintenance of vernaculars from elsewhere in the Empire, and it should alert us to gender as one of the potentially important factors in language conservation and language shift”.

63 There may be different reasons for using explicit references to the Scriptures (τὸν νόμον οὐκ ἀκούετε; 4:21; γέγραπται 4:27; λέγει ἡ γραφή 4:30), e.g., to take on the opponents in their own game, or to rhetorically invoke authority and so forth. What these references also clearly signal, though, is the introduction of the linguistic terrain of Hebrew texts, even if Paul cites the Greek version.

64 Douglas Cairns, *Body Language in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2005).

65 For more on emotions and multiculturalism, see Aneta Pavlenko, *Emotions and Multilingualism*, Reprinted. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

control over 1st-century people in many ways, in which crucifixion was exemplary. A “sadistically cruel” and “utterly shameful death”,⁶⁶ its use intended to preserve law and order and instil fear amongst rebels, criminals, and especially slaves. Paul employed the cross metaphor at crucial turning points in the letter: 2:19 (faith and changing one’s life); 3:1 (preaching Christ crucified), 3:13 (faith reaching back to Abraham); 5:11 (circumcision negating the cross as “stumbling block”); 5:24 (Christ crucified and eliminating passions); and 6:12 (circumcision to avoid persecution for the cross) – all of which culminates in Paul’s claim in 6:14. Invoking the cross meant that the Empire’s presence remained palpable, although not explicitly mentioned.⁶⁷

11.4.3.2 Code-switching: Jerusalem

Paul’s use of the LXX raises the question to what extent the saying that “bilingualism does not necessarily entail biliteracy, although biliteracy generally entails bilingualism”⁶⁸ applies to his use of the LXX and linguistic terms from languages other than Greek? Mullen identified three types of bilingual phenomena, which also form a continuum, that can be present in texts displaying bilingual phenomena: code-switching,⁶⁹ borrowing, and interference. Earlier mention was made of possible grammatical and lexical Latinisms in his letters, but in Galatians the different spellings of Jerusalem may suggest Hebrew code-switching. It is important to distinguish between words from one language taken up into another, or where such words simply form part of an author’s idiolect, or is perhaps characteristic of a community’s linguistic code or the speech of a literary community.⁷⁰ Mullen’s claim that “[t]he more complex forms of code-switching (some forms of inter-sentential and intra-sentential suggest more than just a brief acknowledgement of a second language and culture; they are more indicative of a duality of identity” is certainly often borne out in Paul’s use of Jerusalem in Galatians.⁷¹

66 Gerald O’Collins, “Crucifixion”, *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1208.

67 The presence of the Roman in addition to the local, accompanied the tolerance of the Romans in allowing Greek to remain the dominant language of the eastern Mediterranean (Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome’s Cultural Revolution*, 13-4.)

68 Mullen, “Introduction”, 14.

69 Code-switching can appear in various forms, such as tag-switching where a tag such as an exclamation of another language is inserted; inter-sentential switching where the switch in languages occurs between sentence or clause boundaries; or intra-sentential switching which happens within the sentence or clause boundaries (Mullen, “Introduction”, 18).

70 Mullen, “Introduction”, 20.

71 Mullen, “Introduction”, 22. Such code-switching takes on another element, when it is realised that “Culture does not merely say who you are. It says who you are *in relation to others*” (Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome’s Cultural Revolution*, 28, emphasis in original).

Outside of the Gospels and Acts, Jerusalem is seldom referenced;⁷² four of the nine times Paul used it, are in Galatians.⁷³ When Paul referenced the city earlier, he used the general Greek name Ἱεροσόλυμα three times (1:17, 18; 2:1), but in Galatians 4, he switched to another version of the city's name, Ἱερουσαλήμ (4:25, 26), transcribed from the Hebrew יְרוּשָׁלַיִם. Since the second version is predominant in the LXX, and Paul constructed his allegory in Galatians 4 through texts from the LXX, does this explain his shift to this particular spelling of Jerusalem? Or was Paul's use of the Jewish spelling an indication of his ability to read and write Hebrew, that his bilingualism included also biliteracy?

The extra linguistic context or social setting of code-switching is often an indication of linguistic skill, whereas interference is mostly unintentional and even beyond the control of the writer.⁷⁴ Although ancient authors' intentionality or bilingual aptitude is difficult to construct, it is the setting and argument of the Galatians letter that may hint at Paul's purpose. In a letter showing his frustration and anger, was his code-switching perhaps one more way of making his case, namely that his embeddedness in Jewish tradition and even Hebrew, enables him to best reinterpret these in view of Christ? That is, his code-switching is likely to have been another way of taking on the opponents, intending to show not only his own inclination and positive attitude to Jewish tradition, but also his superiority in making sense of Jesus in the tradition.

Again, in Galatians 4, also, Paul's ambiguous attitude towards the Roman Empire is not altogether hidden from sight. He portrays the Jesus community twice as a civic body in his letters, describing it as the heavenly Jerusalem in Galatians 4:26,⁷⁵ with Jesus followers as its citizens. The presentation of God as the civic founder and the father of a new race of Jesus followers did not align with imperial or even legal protection for family households as building blocks of society, or with imperial ideology's popular

72 In the Pauline letters (Rom 15:19, 25, 26, 31; 1 Cor 16:13; Gal 1:17, 18; 2:1; 4:25, 26), in Heb 12:22, and three times in Revelation (3:12, 21:2, 10).

73 Elsewhere Paul plotted his ministry with Jerusalem as point of orientation, from where he moved concentrically outwards, "from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum (ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλήμ καὶ κύκλῳ μέχρι τοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ, Rom 15:19).

74 Mullen, "Introduction", 20. As Mullen explains further, "Levels and types of code-switching can also be related to speakers' and interlocutors' attitudes, their age, their gender, the role of linguistic varieties in the community, the origins of the community, the attitude of the community to code-switching". (Mullen, "Introduction", 22).

75 In Phil 3:20 the Jesus group is also described as a heavenly form of government, τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς. The notion derives from Jewish apocalyptic but does not suggest a replacement for Jerusalem, or an eschatological descending of an entity from above, but rather "a radical eschatologizing of the heavenly commonwealth to which Christians already belong on earth" (Gerhard Ebeling, *The Truth of the Gospel. An Exposition of Galatians*, trans. David Green [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985], 235; see also James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993], 25-30; Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989], 118-9).

claim that the emperor is the father of his country.⁷⁶ The socio-political dimension extended beyond Roman imperialism, as is clear from Pauline sentiments towards the Jerusalem leaders of the movement in Galatians 1 and 2, portraying acrimonious rivalry.

11.5 CONCLUSION

This very brief account wanted to show the value of a modern theory, such as multilingualism, for biblical studies. Dealing with the Pauline texts as complex semiotic processes rather than pre-filled reservoirs of self-contained semantic units requires attention for rhetorical strategies in all their complexity for the interplay of different semiotic systems and for the dynamic relationship with the multilingual, imperium-infused context they had to serve. Some scholars rightfully promote a mutually enriching “bi-directionality of influence” between studies of contemporary and ancient multilingualism.⁷⁷ Alertness to analogies between language shifts (and even language loss) in the linguistic ancient history of the Mediterranean and those of European colonial expansion,⁷⁸ does not mean that the differences should be elided, or characteristic elements of various eras of ancient history be ignored. Such sentiments informed this brief investigation of the Pauline letters, the author of which has often been claimed as an exemplary cultural hybrid of his time.⁷⁹

76 John L. White, *The Apostle of God. Paul and the Promise of Abraham* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 166.

77 Mullen, “Introduction”, 7.

78 Clackson, “Language Maintenance and Language Shift”, 36.

79 In fact, Mullen “Introduction”, 13, is of the opinion that “increasingly sophisticated analysis of written multilingualism may be of particular importance with regard to our future interaction with modern linguists”, particularly with regard to linguistic landscapes, written bilingualism, multimodal analysis and visual code-switching.