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NOTE

This essay is the second in a set of five articles that form the current issue of JOLCEL. The other contributions are “Introduction: Latin–Greek Code-Switching in Early Modernity” by William M. Barton and Raf Van Rooy (pp. 1–26), “Dialects and Languages in the Poetic Oeuvre of Laurentius Rhodoman (1545–1606)” by Stefan Weise (pp. 51–73), “Latin–Greek Code-Switching in Vicente Mariner’s (ca. 1570–1642) Correspondence with Andreas Schott (1552–1629): A Case-Study” by William M. Barton (pp. 75–94) and “Non δίγλωττον aut τρίγλωττον neque πεντάγλωττον, sed παντάγλωττον? The Polyglot Anna Maria van Schurman (1607–1678) and Her (Latin–Greek) Code-Switching” by Pieta Van Beek (pp. 96–117).

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Roger Ascham's Latin–Greek Code-Switching: A Philosophical Phenomenon*

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ABSTRACT

The Englishman Roger Ascham (ca. 1515–1568) was an expert Latinist and Hellenist, and an inveterate code-switcher. This article will assess Ascham's careful incorporation of Greek into his writing, be it single words, phrases or quotations. It will consider his extensive Latin correspondence and theological treatises that were inflected with Greek; his Latin and Greek poetry; and also one of his most famous tracts composed in the vernacular. I will explore how his use of Greek heightened a sense of sociability at both micro- and macro-levels through the establishment of a network of 'belonging'. Ascham's conspicuous cultivation of royalty and nobles also implicated his Greek code-switches in the business of State governance. Yet many of Ascham's Greek references were religiously freighted; this was especially so in his two theological Latin tracts, each of which broached sensitive doctrinal topics and relied on the Greek New Testament as a guarantor of religious veracity. In addition to probing the meanings of discrete parcels of Greek, this article will also broach the significant role Greek might play in terms of linguistic enhancement, both for Latin and also the vernacular. Taking this further, I will additionally suggest that Greek could be instrumental in effecting a broader programme of moral formation. Hence a fundamental premise and arrival-point of this paper is that code-switching was more than just a practice; it was a mentality.

* Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own, and Latin and Greek orthography and any accentuation has been standardized in line with modern conventions.

1 Introduction

In his final work, *The Scholemaster*, the sixteenth-century humanist Roger Ascham stoutly declared:

For good and choice meats be no more requisite for healthy bodies than proper and apt words be for good matters ... For mark all ages, look upon the whole course of both Greek and Latin tongues, and ye shall surely find that when apt and good words began to be neglected ... then also began ill deeds to spring, strange manners to oppress good orders, new and fond opinions to strive with old and true doctrine, first in philosophy and after in religion.¹

Here, *in nuce* (or *ἐν ὀλίγῳ* if you prefer), Ascham presents us very directly with his conception of language, one that, depending on its quality, impinged on individual conduct, on civic regulation, and on doctrinal and ideological beliefs. This conviction was central to Ascham’s entire programme, and in turn must colour our view of his prolific Latin–Greek code-switching. Indeed, a fundamental premise of this article is that code-switching was more than just a practice or a status-marker; it was a mentality. I shall argue that, for Ascham at least, it constituted a symbolically-charged activity; that it was closely correlated with community-creation and also larger issues of rule, but also—and perhaps more strikingly—with religious truth, and linguistic-ethical improvement. Indeed, evident in all of Ascham’s code-switches was a deep sense of the sacrality of Greek, a perception that it was a special language of peculiar power. While the primary focus will be Ascham, his approach merits our attention as it has the potential to shed light on the habits and mindsets of other Latin–Greek code-switchers of the time.

Before advancing further, I offer a few words on Ascham’s background, which might help us to understand a little more about what qualified him to use Greek within a Latinate setting in the first place. The life of the Englishman Ascham (ca. 1515–68) coincided with a tumultuous period in English history, witnessing the reigns of five monarchs of vastly different confessional hues: Henry VIII and his break with Rome but rather indeterminate religious policy; his son Edward VI, who launched one of the most radical Protestant experiments in all of Europe; his (fudged) Protestant successor, the nine-day Queen, Lady Jane; the staunchly Catholic Mary I; and finally the *via media* Protestant Elizabeth I. During this time of continuous change, Ascham worked as a university scholar, a royal tutor, and court servant and diplomatic secretary in the Low Countries, all the while taking an active role in the religious reform of the Tudor realms. He was an expert Latinist, acting as Public Orator at Cambridge University, and serving as Latin Secretary under both Mary I and Elizabeth I. Ascham was also a very gifted Hellenist. While still a student, Ascham’s Greek tutor, Robert Pember, complimented him on his flair for Greek and referred to a separate letter that Ascham had written to

¹ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 3, 211–12.

him entirely in that language.² By the mid to late 1530s, Ascham was himself lecturing on Greek authors, in particular Aristotle and Plato.³ Between 1541 and 1543, he produced the first Latin translation of the Greek commentaries on Philemon and Titus, attributed to Oecumenius,⁴ at a time when the field of Greek patristics was still in its infancy both in England and elsewhere in Northern Europe.⁵ Later in his life, he would also teach royals and other nobles in Greek, including Elizabeth, both as a princess and also as Queen.⁶

Among these many obligations, Ascham also produced a number of written works, including tracts composed in Latin and—perhaps more famously, at least today—his native English. All of these works broach the use of Greek or were interspersed with parcels of Greek, be it single words, phrases, or longer quotations. Over the course of this article, I will review Ascham’s use of Greek code-switches in his extensive Latin correspondence, in his theological works in Latin, in the Latin and Greek poetry he composed, and finally in *The Scholemaster*, his most influential and well-known text, written in the vernacular.⁷ While the actual utilization of switches into Greek constitutes the primary concern of this article, Ascham’s *obiter dicta* about the status and capabilities of the Greek language are also pertinent, and will be mentioned along the way. Additionally, as I will suggest towards the end of this article, the integration of Greek into Ascham’s vernacular writing was not insignificant, and it is likely that his views about Greek’s relationship to Latin also extended into his thoughts about the emerging English language. Throughout, I will attempt to show that Ascham’s sprinkles of Greek were far from superficial or merely ‘rhetorical’, but deeply serious and bound up with an entire philosophy, one which was almost certainly not unique to Ascham.

2 Community creation

In recent years scholars have called attention to and evaluated the extraordinarily polyglot nature of early modern Europe. A recurring emphasis has been the cultural context of language use, with a strong focus on the ways in which language

² See Edward Grant’s *Vita et Obitu Rogeri Aschami* (ibid., 311); unfortunately, this letter in Greek seems not to have survived. It is clear that Ascham wrote other letters in Greek: there is mention in 1541 of a Greek letter written to Archbishop Edward Lee (Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.1, 18); and in a mailing to John Seton in 1544, Ascham suggests that he might write to a potential new patron “vel Graece vel Latine vel utrumque” (“in Greek, or in Latin or both”) (Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.1, 61).

³ Ryan, *Roger Ascham*, 25–26. It is unclear whether this was done in Greek or Latin, and indeed whether the students were reading these authors in the original Greek.

⁴ Ascham’s identification of ‘Oecumenius’ as the author of the commentaries was an over-simplification: the material he translated was just one authority among several, including Chrysostom, Theodoret and Cyril.

⁵ The full title was *Expositiones item antiquae, in epistolas Divi Pauli ad Titum et Philemonem, ex diversis sanctorum Patrum Graece scriptis commentariis ab Oecumenio collectae, et a R.A. Latine versae*. See Kennerley, “Patristic Scholarship and Ascham’s “troubled years”.”

⁶ For more on such royal teaching commissions, see Nicholas and Law, *Ascham and his Sixteenth-Century World*; and Pollnitz, *Princely Education in Early Modern Britain*.

⁷ Ascham’s letters are set out in Giles, *Ascham*, vols. 1–2, his verse and *The Scholemaster* in vol. 3. His theological tracts can be found in Ascham, *Apologia ... Cui accesserunt themata quaedam theologica*.

practices are socially, historically and politically embedded.⁸ It has been further suggested that social groups could confer value on particular languages, determine the appropriate codes, assess the relative ranking or prestige of languages, and even adjudicate the quality or purity of a language.⁹ One of the most widely-dispersed linguistic communities of the early modern era was one organized around Latin, the European *lingua franca*, a language which gave shape to what is commonly termed the *res publica literaria*, a ‘Republic of Letters’.¹⁰ Although ill-defined and more a community of the imagination than a physical reality, this Republic of Letters, which promoted a Latinity rooted in humanist ideals, wielded enormous influence in both national and international affairs. Under this umbrella grouping, individuals forged a variety of networks within and across borders. Ascham’s correspondence, however, seems to reflect the development of a further subset of the Republic of Letters, one that was composed of individuals who had a literacy in both Latin *and* Greek. I will propose in what follows that the use of Greek, even if deployed within the far more public-facing language of Latin, might result in the establishment of a series of sub-groups that were yet more tightly-knit; or, to use more modern terminology, ‘information bubbles’.

While the vast majority of Ascham’s letters are in Latin, and clearly rely on and invest in that society of Latin speakers, many of them are flecked with Greek. In his capacity as Public Orator and Latin secretary to two queens, Ascham would write hundreds of letters in Latin to public worthies across the continent. The letters that incorporate Greek tended to comprise exchanges with other scholars, either in Cambridge or other European universities, but also include those with select nobles linked to such centres of learning. Within Ascham’s corpus it is possible to discern efforts to build affiliations at both micro and macro levels, and I shall discuss both.

Ascham’s dispatches that contain Greek often do so towards the start of the letter, as though the Greek almost acts as a ‘masonic handshake’, a form of signalling that acknowledges that both sender and recipient understand the language. In this sense, code-switching was very much bound up with *amicitia*. So, for example, a letter that Ascham sent to an absent colleague, James Cordingley, about a college matter, began as follows:

Quoties memoria repeto, carissime Cordinglaee, iucundissimam illam familiaritatem, quae mihi tecum arctissime intercessit, οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγε νῆ Δία δικαίως δοκοῖην τῆς μεγίστης ἀχαριστίας ἀνάτιος εἶναι sed ab omni prorsus humanitatis officio discedere, si postquam tu a nobis discesseris ullam necessitudinis nostrae discessionem mea scribendi negligentia patiar obrepere.¹¹

⁸ Auger and Brammall, *Multilingual Texts and Practices*; Bloemendal, *Bilingual Europe*; Gallagher, *Learning Languages*; and Winkler and Schaffnerath, *Neo-Latin and the Vernaculars*.

⁹ Auger and Brammall, *Multilingual Texts and Practices*, 4.

¹⁰ See also Bots and Waquet, *La République des lettres*; and Burke, *Languages and Communities*.

¹¹ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.1, 9 (1539/40). “My dearest Cordingley, how often I recall to mind that most delightful friendship that bound you and me in the most intimate way, [and] *I would not, by Zeus, justly seem to be guiltless of the greatest ingratitude*, but to break completely with every duty of courtesy if, after your departure from us, I should allow any break in our connection to steal upon me by my negligence in writing.”

The Greek is crucial to the opening appeal to intimacy. It also contains a learned allusion, which nods to both Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, οὐδ’ ἂν οὐτός μοι δοκεῖ δικαίως ἀναίτιος εἶναι ἀφροσύνης,¹² and also Cicero, who used the Greek term in one of his letters to Atticus, “sed ita meruisse illum de me puto ut ἀχαριστίας crimen subire non audeam”¹³ The Greek deployed here acts as an additional bond between the two men both by its actual content, and through a shared consciousness of its provenance. It might even be argued that the fusion of Xenophon and Cicero as simultaneous points of reference effectively amounted to a sort of code-switching allusivity, an integrative patterning of ancient Greek (Xenophon) and ancient code-switcher (here, Cicero) which could be repeated.

A sixteenth-century scholar like Ascham would have been alert to the fact that he was working within a tradition of code-switching into Greek, a consideration that might suffuse certain phrases with yet further weight and meaning, but might equally have served to ‘naturalize’ phrases with the result that they underscored a greater sociability. Erika Rummel, in her survey of Greek in Erasmus’ correspondence, has shown how certain Greek phrases were used repeatedly by Erasmus to generate an air of fraternity.¹⁴ Some of these appear in Ascham’s letters too. For example, in a dispatch that Ascham sent to Sir William Paget, himself a former Cantabrigian and the then Secretary of State, concerning his own suitability for the Greek professorship at Cambridge University, Ascham described Paget as a “Deus ἀπὸ μηχανῆς,” writing, “Tum cepi ego multas cogitationes versare, equisne tu, quasi Deus ἀπὸ μηχανῆς a Deo Optimo Maximo non solum ad Reipublicae salutem sed etiam ad meae causae susceptionem mittereris.”¹⁵ The phrase “Deus ἀπὸ μηχανῆς,” which is believed to have originated with Plato,¹⁶ was also a favourite of Erasmus.¹⁷

Rummel further points out that the use of Greek often signalled emotional involvement, since each Greek word “affected the reader through its inherent qualities and its foreign character.”¹⁸ In this way too, then, the incorporation of Greek might act to heighten levels of intimacy. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Ascham often deployed Greek tragedy in moments of particular personal distress. So, for instance, in a letter to John Redman, a fellow college member, in which Ascham expresses his bewilderment about a certain in-house hostility towards

¹² Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, 1.5.10. “... not even he, it seems to me, would rightly be considered guiltless of inconsideration.”

¹³ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 9.7.4. “But I consider that he [Pompey] deserves so much from me that I dare not lay myself open to a charge of ingratitude” Ascham would use the Greek term on a few occasions: to Cheke in 1551 (Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.2, 236); and in a letter to Stephen Gardiner of 1553 (Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.2, 383).

¹⁴ Rummel, “The Use of Greek in Erasmus’ Letters.” As she points out, the theory behind such usage was discussed in part in his *De Copia*.

¹⁵ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.1, 51 (1544). “Then I began to reflect at length how you, just like a *deus ex machina*, you were sent by Almighty God, not only for the safety of the state but also for the support of my cause.”

¹⁶ Plato, *Cratylus*, 425D.

¹⁷ Rummel, “The Use of Greek in Erasmus’ Letters,” 60. It was also used by Cicero.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 56.

him, he wrote, "βλάβαι enim sunt ποδώκες, ut ait in Antigone Sophocles."¹⁹ It may be that certain Greek literary genres helped to engender a particular psychological register in early modern correspondence more broadly. Indeed, Ascham's deployment of Sophocles here is closely mirrored by Philip Melanchthon's citations of the Greek tragedians in his letters.²⁰

In addition to cementing current friendships in Ascham's own land, his application of Greek played an important role in cultivating close acquaintances with individuals further afield, indeed often with people he would never actually meet in person. One of his most meaningful lines of correspondence was with Johannes Sturm, a renowned classical scholar and Hellenist, head of the Strasbourg Gymnasium, and prominent player in the Protestant movement there.²¹ The written communication between Ascham and Sturm was frequent and long-lasting, and the two men became so close that Ascham would make Sturm godfather to his son, and their wives would send each other gifts. In his many epistles to Sturm, Ascham regularly employs Greek phrases and literary quotes, discusses the Greek Fathers, and early modern Greek scholarship, including various projects Sturm himself is working on.²² It is striking that Ascham's first letter to Sturm began with a direct comparison of Athens and Rome. He referred to Athens as the cradle of all eloquence and learning, and to Rome as an equal practitioner of rhetoric, but also as a place that had fallen into a state of "papist luxury" (*papistico luxu*) and become "an empire of the Antichrist" (*imperioso Antichristianismo*).²³ This identification of two cultures, Hellenic and Latinate, at the head of this first letter, and Ascham's categorical pronouncement that "Hinc incredibilis ille sensus amoris, quo omnes fere docti etiamnum prosequuntur Athenas illas Atticas",²⁴ captures well the development of a specific branch of humanism, the focus of which was as much ancient Greece as Rome. The close conjunction of Greek and Latin literature also reflects an outlook that Sturm evinced in his own writing, particularly in his educational tracts.²⁵

By extension, it is interesting to observe in Ascham's letters his tendency to define individuals by their proficiency in and allegiance to Latin and Greek studies. In another letter to Sturm, Ascham informs Sturm about the imminent arrival of one of his colleagues, John Hales, in Strasbourg, writing, "Doctrina verissimae religionis Christi optime institutus est. ... Literarum amore summo, cognitione vero praeclara imbutus est ... peritiam Latinae linguae perfectam,

¹⁹ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.1, 43 (1544). "For injuries are *swift-footed*, as Sophocles says in Antigone." The reference is from Sophocles, *Antigone*, line 1104.

²⁰ Lazarus, "Tragedy at Wittenberg", 55–56.

²¹ Nicholas, "The Special Relationship."

²² For example, *Dialogi Aristotelici* or *Aristotelian Dialogues*: this was a commentary on Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in dialogue form, but now lost.

²³ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.1, 181–82 (1550).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 182. "For this reason, almost all learned men still follow after Attic Athens with an astonishing sense of devotion."

²⁵ Spitz and Tinsley, *Johann Sturm on Education*.

Graecae mediocrem ... exhausserit.”²⁶ To John Cheke, one of his dearest Cambridge friends and mentors, he alluded to a recommendation from “Elandus noster” (“our friend Eland”) of one Henry Wright, who has “tanta ingenii, industriae, constantiae, spe in rectissimum studiorum cursum ingressus est, hoc est, tam feliciter Aristotelem et Platonem cum Cicerone coniungit ...”²⁷ The use of “coniungit” here was especially potent as it evoked the very act of code-switching itself. It was as though Latin–Greek code-switching, at least within this context of amity-and-introduction, functioned as a guarantor of a sort of ‘soundness’. It denoted a form of trust, and pointed to a presumption that those who know Greek would be able to act ethically with the information encoded in Greek.

There is a similar instance of this in another letter Ascham sent to Francis Douaren, a French jurist and professor of law at the University of Bourges.²⁸ The letter in part comprises a lengthy encomium about a mutual acquaintance, Thomas Martin,²⁹ and in the midst of this passage, Ascham, cognizant of Douaren’s love of classics,³⁰ makes reference to Martin’s appointment to a senior post: “*in numerum τῶν προέδρων*, qui ... maximas hominum controversias cognoscunt et decidunt.”³¹ The calculated use of Greek here seems to help bind and underpin the ties between the three men, and to unite them by a sort of clubbable nod produced by the Greek reference. In this sense, code-switching might be said to function like an actual code, in the MI5 sense – a secret language – in which the significant ‘message’ was less what was said than the fact that both utterer and listener were privy to the code in which it was said. Through his code-switches into Greek, Ascham was generating more than single linkages, but an entire web, as Ascham defined individuals by their proficiency in and allegiance to Greek as well as Latin studies. There had been philhellenic coteries in the past, perhaps most famously, Aldus Manutius’s *Neakademia*, but, by this time, Ascham and others were forging more diffuse networks.

3 Greek’s hegemonic role

Indeed, efforts to create Hellenically-inclined sodalities were not simply confined to Ascham’s academic friends. Ascham was a man with contacts at Court, including with some of the most influential elite in the land. We know that he taught Greek to the English ambassador Richard Morison, Charles Brandon (the future 3rd Duke of Suffolk) and Elizabeth I. We also know, because he tells us time and

²⁶ Ibid., vol. 1.2, 303 (1551). “He [Hales] is very well instructed in the doctrine of the truest religion of Christ ... He is moreover endowed with the highest devotion to and the most excellent knowledge of literature ... [and] he has achieved a complete proficiency in Latin, [and] a moderate one in Greek”

²⁷ Ibid., vol. 1.1, 176 (1549/50). “[Wright has] entered upon a most correct course of studies with so much promise of talent, diligence and perseverance; that is, he so happily conjoins Aristotle and Plato to Cicero”

²⁸ Ibid., vol. 1.2, 431–35, (1554).

²⁹ Sometimes spelt ‘Martyr’.

³⁰ He was one of a splinter group of lawyers who applied the philological methods of the Italian humanists to legal texts.

³¹ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.2, 434 (1554). “... as one of the principal officials who inform themselves about and decide the most important controversies of men.”

time again, that he was tireless supporter of the pursuit of Greek by any royals and nobles in whom he sensed a sympathy for classical Greek studies, and we must also include those figures within Ascham’s Latin–Greek compass.

His correspondence with certain luminaries often either embedded a Greek term within a Latin text, or made mention of a classical Greek author or work of literature. There was often a religious charge to the Greek he used. In 1551 he wrote to Lady Jane Grey, the daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Suffolk, and a young woman destined to be the unfortunate short-lived Queen at the end of Edward’s reign. His letter opens with an almost devotional recollection of the moment when he came across her, “a divine maiden” (*divinam Virginem*) at her ancestral home, diligently reading “the divine *Phaedo*” (*divinum ... Phaedonem*) “of the divine Plato” (*divini Platonis*) in Greek.³² With the cry ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ θεοί (“O Zeus and the Gods!”), a phrase found—and not by coincidence—in another Platonic work, the *Protagoras*,³³ Ascham declared Jane more fortunate on account of her reading in Greek than because of her royal descent on both her father’s and her mother’s side: “hac parte felicior es iudicanda, quam quod πατρόθεν μητρόθεν τε ex regibus reginisque genus tuum deducis.”³⁴ He followed this with the exhortation to press onward, calling her “the pride of your country” (*patriae decus*) and the “highest admiration to all strangers” (*omnibus exteris summam admirationem*). This was, in fact, an episode that Ascham would relate repeatedly, including in his final work, *The Scholemaster*.³⁵

Ascham would make constant reference to the Greek abilities of the great and the good in his letters, regularly via code-switching, and in doing so, he heightened yet further the importance of the language. In a letter to Sturm he observed how Mildred Cecil, the renowned daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke and wife of the Secretary of State, William Cecil, “haud aliter Graece intelligit et loquitur quam Anglice.”³⁶ He then proceeded to praise Cecil himself with an accolade that Thucydides bestowed on Pericles, “Γινῶναι τὰ δέοντα, ἐρμηνεύσαι τὰ γνωθέντα, φιλόπολις εἶναι, καὶ χρημάτων κρείστων,³⁷ huic communis consentiensque Anglorum vox impartita sit.”³⁸ In many letters to Sturm, Ascham lavished praise on his charge, Elizabeth, for her excellence in both Greek and Latin tongues. In one missive, Ascham outlined the extent to which Aristotle’s definition of excellence was wholly transfused in Elizabeth, writing, “Nam κάλλος in illa, μέγεθος, σωφροσύνη καὶ φιλοεργία omnia summa.”³⁹ When we realize that Ascham was here quoting qualities listed (in the same order) in Aristotle’s own *Rhetoric*,

³² Ibid., 239 (1551).

³³ Plato, *Protagoras*, 310E and also in Aristophanes’ *Plutus*.

³⁴ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.2, 239. “In this degree are you to be judged the happier than because you trace your family back to kings and queens *on your father’s and mother’s side*.” μητρόθεν and πατρόθεν: these words are found together in Plutarch, *On the Education of Children*, 1.2.

³⁵ Ibid., vol. 3, 118. And also in two letters to Sturm (Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.2, 227 (1550) and 298 (1551)).

³⁶ Ibid., vol. 1.2, 228 (1550). “[She] understands and speaks Greek equally with English.”

³⁷ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 2.60.5–6.

³⁸ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.2, 228. ““To know all that is fitting [to know], to be able to apply what he knew, to be a lover of his country, and to be superior to money”: to this, the common and consistent voice of Englishmen has pledged [itself].”

³⁹ Ibid., vol. 1.1, 191 (1550). “For in her is contained all beauty, stature, prudence and industry.”

we see a deliberate attempt to harmonize praise of the pupil and the learning of the tutor. The technique not only served to underscore the tightness of the relationship between teacher and student, but also invested the Latin–Greek clusters with a layer of powerful patronage and associated them with the business of rule.⁴⁰

Ascham’s remarks about the *modus* of the future Queen’s assimilation of Greek illustrate this point still further. Ascham was emphatic that the nature of Elizabeth’s instruction was not just linguistic but also literary and wholly directed towards government. He actively encouraged her to consider both the words and also the examples that stood behind them. In another letter to Sturm in 1562, when Elizabeth was on the throne, he wrote:

... non esse in aula, in academiis, non inter eos, qui vel religioni vel reipublicae praesident, apud nos quattuor nostrates, qui melius intelligunt Graecam linguam quam ipsa regina. Cum legit Demosthenem vel Aeschinem, admirationem mihi ipsa saepenumero movet, cum video illam scienter intelligere, non dico, verborum potestatem, sententiarum structuram, proprietatem linguae, orationis ornamenta et totius sermonis numerosam ac concinnam comprehensionem, sed illa etiam quae maiora sunt, oratoris sensum atque stomachum, totius causae contentionem, populi et scita et studia, urbis cuiusque mores atque instituta, et quae sunt huius generis reliqua omnia.⁴¹

In the same letter, Ascham informed Sturm that in every action the Queen held in view Plato’s precept that the law is the master of man, not man the master of the law.⁴² As Ascham presented it here, a training in Greek language and literature resulted in profitable and wise governance, and he effectively rendered his monarch a guardian of both *patria* and *lingua*. Ascham did not restrict his comments in that regard to Elizabeth alone. In another letter, this time penned during the reign of Edward VI, Ascham expressed his delight that Sturm has included “his Majesty [Edward] in his *Aristotelian Dialogues*”, commenting, “Nam cum audiet abs te, quam praeclarum sit τὸν ἄρχοντα φιλοσοφεῖν et rempublicam consilio, non fortuna gubernari, consilia autem optima ex optimis hauriri libris ... uberrimam voluptatem ... in universam Angliam et singulos Anglos transfusus sis.”⁴³ In utilizing a Greek code-switch in this allusion to Plato’s philosopher kings, Ascham was in effect signifying—and with great portentousness—a direct linkage between language and leadership.

⁴⁰ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1.6.

⁴¹ Giles, *Ascham*, vol 2, 63 (1562). “There are not in the court, not in the universities, not among those who are in charge of religion or the state, not among us all, four Englishmen who understand the Greek language better than the Queen herself. When she reads Demosthenes or Aeschines, she so often arouses my admiration; when I see that she expertly understands, not [only], I say, the force of the words, the structure of the sentences, the essence of the languages, the style of the speech and the rhythmical and elegant unity of the entire discourse, but even those considerations which are of greater importance, [namely] the meaning and tone of the speech, the thesis of the whole subject-matter, both the statutes and the spirit of the people, the customs and laws of each city and all the rest of this sort.”

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.2, 225 (1550). “For when he hears from you how splendid it would be *if the king was a philosopher*, and if the state were guided by counsel, not by fortune, and that the best counsels are derived from the best books ... you will pour out the richest pleasure ... to all England and into all Englishmen.” Ascham was here paraphrasing Plato’s *Republic*, 473D.

4 The sacrosanctity of Greek

It is certainly the case that Ascham’s approach to Greek can be viewed as a form of civic humanism, insofar as he was convinced that Greek learning could contribute to a *vita activa*, and a new form of civic action founded on the revival of ancient ideals. Yet defining Ascham’s use of Greek solely in this way alone runs the risk of transforming Ascham’s code-switching into a purely political ethos and a largely secular activity. That this has become a common tendency is largely owing to the historiography on Renaissance political thought, which still enjoys considerable sway today, and has tended to treat ‘civic humanism’ as a move towards modernity and secularization. In so doing, it has marginalized the Reformation and the religious programmes that continued to be a fundamental driver for so many writers and thinkers throughout the early modern period.⁴⁴ While I have already touched on the religious significance of Greek for Ascham, in this next part of this paper, I suggest that Ascham’s Latin–Greek code-switching had a deeply spiritual complexion and was implicated in a much broader Protestant mission.

A code-switch that recurs in Ascham’s letters during the late 1540s, when hopes for a Protestant settlement were running high following Edward’s accession, involved the Greek term *ἑθελοθησκεία* (literally, “will-worship”). In a letter of 1547 to Sir John Astley, prominent courtier and member of Princess Elizabeth’s household, Ascham wrote:

Expectamus, imo Deum oramus, ut omnis *ἑθελοθησκεία* in hoc parlamento tollatur. Quam late patet hoc Graecum vocabulum, et quem impetum facit in universas verae religionis partes, explicare tibi potest Grindallus noster. Veram doctrinam Christi populus omnis libentissime amplectitur; sola sacerdotum natio contra veritatem repugnabit.⁴⁵

The term *ἑθελοθησκεία* is a biblical one, found in Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians 2:23. The Latin equivalent (used in the Vulgate and by Erasmus) was “superstitio.” The word seems to have denoted an ill-judged asceticism, which leads to over-indulgence, a form of action that men pursue of their own volition without authority from God. In essence, it denotes a human tradition. Ascham used the same code-switch in a letter sent in 1547 to Thomas Cranmer, the then (avowedly Protestant) Archbishop of Canterbury, and again in a letter in English to Edward Raven in 1551.⁴⁶ The Greek term seems to have operated as an important

⁴⁴ The literature on Renaissance civic humanism and republicanism is vast, and includes Castiglione, “Republicanism and Its Legacy”; Hankins, *Virtue Politics*; and Rabil, Jr., “The Significance of Civic Humanism.”

⁴⁵ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.1, 108 (1547). “We hope, indeed, we pray to God, that all *will-worship* is removed in this Parliament. How widely this Greek term is understood and what an assault it makes against the universal parts of true religion, our Grindal can explain to you. All the people most gladly embrace the true doctrine of Christ; only the priestly tribe will fight against the truth.”

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 1.1, 124 and vol. 1.2, 285. To Cranmer, Ascham writes: “... cum divo Paulo loquamur prudentia humanae *ἑθελοθησκείας* foedissime corruptum et construpratum” (“... to say together with St Paul, ruined and defiled most foully by the “wisdom” of human *will-worship*,” to Raven, Ascham writes “The Prince of

watchword, one that played a role in a broader Protestant campaign against Catholic superstition. For instance, one prominent feature of John Cheke’s preface to a translation of Plutarch’s *De superstitione* (1546) was a definition of ἐθελοθηρσκειά,⁴⁷ and the term can also be found in the writings of John Calvin and Martin Bucer.⁴⁸

What is striking about the 1547 letter to Astley quoted above is the way Ascham, after using the Greek term, comments that Grindal would “explain how widely this Greek word is understood.” This reference suggests that Ascham’s code-switch into Greek constituted a form of private language, a veiled reference to a still—notwithstanding the new Protestant atmosphere—combustible topic. This was certainly an age when letters were often intercepted, and Ascham’s emphasis that the bearer of the letter, William Ireland, was a trusted friend points to a certain discretion about its contents. Indeed, with this code-switch Ascham advertised his commitment to Scripture, and more crucially, to the authentic Holy Writ *in Greek*. For Ascham, as for many reformers, that was where the true meaning of the Bible resided. While an adherence to Scripture was embraced by many across the confessional spectrum, a dogged commitment to the original Greek of the New Testament was far less typical, and Greek was perceived in some quarters as a dangerous and a potentially heretical medium.⁴⁹

Ascham’s belief in Greek’s capacity for *ad fontes* verity was also evident in his other writings. It is at this point that we can turn to Ascham’s incorporation of Greek into his two Latin theological works, both composed while he was still at Cambridge. The first of these was not in fact a single treatise, but a collection of mini theses on particular biblical verses (both Old and New Testament), on patristic statements and/or on theological concepts, such as the notion of “felix culpa” (literally, “happy fault”). Entitled *Themata theologica*, Ascham composed these theses over a period of years (ca. 1539–46) during the final phase of Henry VIII’s reign.⁵⁰ The second work was a much more uniform piece, a treatise under the title of *Apologia pro caena Dominica contra missam et eius praestigias* (“A Defence of the Lord’s Supper against the Mass and its Magic”), consisting of a trenchant case against the Catholic Mass, written at the very start of Edward VI’s new reign in 1547, when the Eucharist was a sensitive topic.⁵¹

Latin–Greek code-switching occurs in both of these theological works. In each, the most obvious reason for code-switching is to supplement the Latin biblical quotations with their equivalent in Greek. So for example, at the start of theme 7 in the *Themata*, a piece which begins with a quotation from Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians 8:2, “Si quis putat se aliquid scire, hic nondum cognovit

Piedmont, the Duke of Alva, one of the Emperor’s council, bare [*sic*] torches that night; a wonderful ἐθελοθηρσκειά to live so abominable all the year, and then will needs make amends with God whether he will or not.”

⁴⁷ Περὶ Δεισιδαιμονίας. The unique copy of the preface and translation is Oxford, University College MS 171, housed in the Bodleian Library. The Latin text has never been printed. An English translation of the preface by William Elstob was appended to Strype, *The life of the learned Cheke*.

⁴⁸ Cited by McDiarmid, “Cheke’s Preface to *De Superstitione*,” 114.

⁴⁹ Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek?*, 26.

⁵⁰ See Nicholas, *Ascham’s Themata Theologica*.

⁵¹ For a full text and translation, see Nicholas, *Roger Ascham’s Defence of the Lord’s Supper*.

quemadmodum oportet scire,”⁵² Ascham provides the Greek for each of the references to knowledge in the verse heading.⁵³ Restating the same verse, he writes “Si quis putat se aliquid εἰδέναι nondum quicquam ἔγνωκεν, quemadmodum oportet γινῶναι.”⁵⁴ Ascham rather nonchalantly presents this as (literally) ‘gospel’, with no hint that there might be anything disputable about this content. However, some of the earliest confrontations of the Reformation pivoted on the application of Greek philology.⁵⁵ Ever since Erasmus’ initial publication of his *Novum Instrumentum* of 1516, which comprised a revised Latin version of the New Testament based on the original Greek, the utilization of Greek in biblical translation had become a fraught business. This was because a return to the Greek not only exposed flaws and shortcomings in the Vulgate and destabilized the notion of an ‘orthodox’ version of the Bible, but it also had the potential to undermine time-honoured theological positions, such as penance and the role of the priesthood. Ascham’s policy of interlacing of Greek terms for “knowing” or “understanding” within his Latin reprisal of the Pauline verse illustrated with great visual immediacy his allegiance to the Erasmian philological method, but also his belief in the capacity of Greek to provide that knowledge.

This biblical-based code-switching is yet more prevalent in Ascham’s *Apologia pro caena Dominica*. In fact, Greek was one of Ascham’s chief allies when going into battle with the priestly Mass. Considerable space was given over in this treatise to a careful examination of specific Greek terms as a means of testing and challenging Catholic doctrinal claims. Greek was effectively weaponized. At one point Ascham asked which New Testament Greek word his opponents could use to support the Latin term “sacrificium”, proclaiming, “omnia nomina novi Testamenti Christi colligamus, quibus sacrificium ... appellatur.”⁵⁶ One possibility, he suggested, was the Greek term θυσία (“sacrifice”). However, following a detailed scrutiny of θυσία as used in the Greek of the New Testament, Ascham surmised that the priestly sacrifice was invalid and that the term had a considerably broader application in Scripture:

θυσιαν⁵⁷ illud sacrificium quod soli sacerdotes possidere cupiunt, separatum ab aliis hominibus? ... Negant etiam Christiani omnes, duobus clarissimis testibus Paulo et Petro: Paulo, παρακαλῶ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί: παραστῆσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσιαν ζῶσαν: planissime ad Hebr.

⁵² Ascham, *Themata Theologica*, 55. “If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he has not yet got to know as he ought to know.” Ascham’s wording diverges slightly from the Vulgate, which has “si quis se existimat scire aliquid, nondum cognovit quemadmodum oporteat eum scire;” Erasmus has “si quis sibi videtur aliquid scire nondum quicquam novit quemadmodum oporteat scire.”

⁵³ One of the main Greek resources Ascham was using as he drafted his *Themata Theologica* was a Greek New Testament of 1531, now held at Hatfield House, and inscribed very neatly with the autograph “Rogerus Aschamus.” This was Τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης ἅπαντα. *Novi Testamenti omnia* (Basel, 1531), Hatfield House 7522. The preface was written by Johannes Oecolampadius, one of the chief assistants in Erasmus’ *Novum Testamentum* project.

⁵⁴ εἰδέναι ... ἔγνωκεν ... γινῶναι: Ascham highlights verbs that are used in the Greek New Testament and are the equivalent of “putat” ... “scire”, and “cognosco” and “scire” respectively.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek?*; and Huizinga, *Erasmus and the Age of Reformation*.

⁵⁶ Ascham, *Apologia*, 88. “Let us collect all the records of the New Testament of Christ by which their sacrifice ... is invoked.”

⁵⁷ This represents an interesting Greek–Latin admixture with its Greek noun and Latin enclitic particle.

τῆς δὲ εὐποιίας, και κοινωνίας μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε, τοιαύταις γὰρ θυσίαις εὐαριστεῖται⁵⁸ ὁ θεός: et Petro, ἱεράτευμα ἄγιον, ἀνεύγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας. Iudaei et Gentes nullum verbum tritius habent quam θυσίαν: latius ergo patet haec vox, et in plures res pertinet, quam ut soli privato sacrificio sacerdotum serviat.⁵⁹

The original Greek wording from Romans, Hebrews and Peter 1, interspersed within Ascham's Latin argumentation, served very conspicuously as proofs, almost standing as exhibits might in a court of law, and cumulatively lent considerable clout to his suit. One might understand Ascham's use of Greek here in conjunction with his justification for using Greek that appears at the start of the *Apologia*. He wrote, "cogor Graeca Latinis interponere, ... hoc iam instituo, non ut me Graecis verbis ostentem, sed ut veritatem luminibus suis ostendam."⁶⁰ As far as Ascham was concerned, the Greek that he wove into his Latin broadside was the voice of God, it was the *λόγος* itself and it illuminated the adjoining Latin. When we look at Ascham's Greek code-switches, we could do worse than to imagine the Greek lit up in bright lights and shining forth from the page. Indeed, this was in many ways precisely the effect of printing in Greek in the first place. Yet in a religious context, the presence of Greek effectively served to embed the Greek God, Logos, into the Latin textual frame.

Besides drawing on the Greek of the Gospel to bolster a theological case, Ascham also mobilized passages from the Greek classics and Greek Church Fathers in support of his argument. Following on from the passage above where he 'tested' the philological foundations of the priestly sacrifice in the Mass, Ascham examined another term that he anticipated his opponents might be relying upon. This was the Greek *λειτουργία*, but, once again, Ascham dismissed this as a suitable verbal foundation for a "sacrificium", arguing that the Greek term had its roots in the secular sphere just as much as the religious. Alongside a litany of New Testament citations, Ascham marshalled the Greek orator Isocrates, writing:

Hoc verbum *λειτουργία* a Gentibus ad Christianos, et e Repub. in Religionem dimanavit: Reipub. verbum est, ut in illo, *περὶ εἰρήνης* Isocratis: δημοτικωτέρους εἶναι νομίζετε τοὺς τὰ τῆς πόλεως διανεμομένους, τῶν ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας ὑμῖν λειτουργούντων.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Other versions of the Greek have *εὐαριστεῖται*.

⁵⁹ Ascham, *Apologia*, 90–91. "Is [the Greek] "thusia" that sacrifice which our priests are desirous to have dominion over alone separate from other men? ... All Christians deny this, along with two of the most distinguished witnesses, Paul and Peter: in Paul, "I beseech you, brethren, to make your bodies as a living "thusia" [Romans 12:1] and very clearly in his Epistle to the Hebrews, "Forget your beneficence and fellowship; for with such "thusias" God is well pleased" [Hebrews 13:16]. And in Peter, '... a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual "thusias" [I Peter 2:5]. The Jews and the Gentiles have no word which is more common than "thusia". Therefore, this word extends more widely and applies to more things than to accommodate only the private sacrifice of the priests."

⁶⁰ Ascham, *Apologia*, 88. "I am compelled to intersperse Latin with Greek ... [and] I do this now, not so that I can show off with Greek words, but to demonstrate the truth with their light."

⁶¹ Ascham, *Apologia*, 92–3. "This [Greek] word "leitourgia" has spread from the Gentiles to Christians and from the State into religion. The word is applicable to State business, just as in that *On the Peace* of Isocrates: "Consider that those who dole out public revenues more democratic than those who perform liturgies at their own expense." Isocrates, *On the Peace*, 13. Modern editions of *On the Peace* have: *καὶ*

Ascham would later quote in Greek a short passage from Demosthenes’ *Against Leptines* to make a similar point.⁶² By citing the Greek testimonies of these classical authors in parallel with the Bible, Ascham sets those testimonies on a par with the Gospel passages.⁶³ The point was that Ascham perceived a ‘Christian spirit’ residing within the ancient canon. For Ascham, his code-switches, whether derived from biblical or pagan sources, were charged with the same supernatural properties. In short, Greek scholarship represented not just an important philological tool, but also a vital medium for Christian truth.

5 Linguistic and Christian moral enhancement

A further aim of Ascham’s philology was to find the Greek equivalents of Latin terms. As many of the examples above indicate, Ascham wanted to clarify the Greek equivalent for the words standardly used in Christian worship, since, as he saw it, the original Greek term should be the ultimate source for the Latin. The interdependent relationship between Greek and Latin was one that exercised Ascham through his life. In several letters, Ascham expressed his fears about a disjunction between Latin and Greek texts that would compromise the former. For instance, in a letter to Sturm, he recounted recent linguistic mutilations, describing how “In these last years, Aristotle has come out of France speaking with a Latin tongue ... but thinking very strange thoughts;” and how “Italy has sent us Aeschines and Demosthenes speaking in Latin, but in my opinion not worthily of the orators of that land.”⁶⁴ It is this relationship between Greek and Latin (and by extension, English) that I will consider in the final part of this article. I shall do so with reference to Ascham’s last work, *The Scholemaster*, to some of Ascham’s poetry, and also to the last letter that he ever wrote in 1568, where he outlined—almost by way an end-of-life testimonial—the fundamental aims of his intellectual mission.

The Scholemaster is ostensibly a treatise on educational method and the improvement of Latin through several strategies, which included imitation and a process Ascham termed “double translation”, a technique whereby a student was required to translate a passage of Latin into English and then convert the English back into Latin, always with reference to the original Latin.⁶⁵ The methods of *imitatio* and double translation that Ascham advanced in *The Scholemaster* were selected and designed to facilitate such an interchange between languages. Yet at every stage, Ascham is clear that knowledge of Greek was the *sine qua non* for composition in any other language. He writes, for example:

νομίζετε δημοτικωτέρους εἶναι τοὺς μεθύοντας τῶν νηφόντων καὶ τοὺς νοῦν οὐκ ἔχοντας τῶν εὖ φρονούντων καὶ τοὺς τὰ τῆς πόλεως διανεμομένους τῶν ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας ὑμῖν λειτουργούντων.

⁶² This was a speech in which Demosthenes called for the repeal of a law sponsored by Leptines that denied anyone a special exemption from paying public charges (“leitourgiai”).

⁶³ See also Ascham’s annotations in his Greek New Testament (referred to in n. 53).

⁶⁴ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.1, 185 and 187 (1550).

⁶⁵ Miller, “Double Translation in Humanistic Education.” Ascham may have been one of the first to give a name to the discipline, though the method was expounded much earlier in Cicero, *De Oratore*, 1.155.

It is very rare and marvellous hard to prove excellent in the Latin tongue for him that is not also well seen in the Greek tongue. For even as a hawk flieth not high with one wing, even so a man reacheth not to excellency with one tongue.⁶⁶

References to classical Greek authors are present at every stage in *The Scholemaster*. They arguably form the bedrock of the work, and principles from Plato and Aristotle, in particular, but also from other authors, including Demosthenes, Isocrates and Xenophon, provide the fundamental basis for each of his pedagogical recommendations. It is not for nothing that Ascham refers to his work as a *σχολαστήριον* (“scholastērion”) via a Greek code-switch in his letter to Sturm.⁶⁷ Passages of original Greek script also pepper *The Scholemaster*, just as they would in his Latin compositions, and in a way that seems to suggest he viewed this work in the vernacular as a sort of Neo-Latin document and as susceptible to refinement as Latin was. For Ascham, Greek was the jumping-off point for all language advancement, but he felt that an especially close bond existed between Latin and Greek. Thus, we find him describing the putative schoolmaster of *The Scholemaster* to Sturm as “a reciprocation of two languages” (*reciprocantem duarum linguarum*) and “a rendering of each on both sides” (*utriusque utrubique vertendarum rationem*), “so that indubitably they may change Greek to Latin and then that same Latin once more into Greek.”⁶⁸

Ascham certainly presented Greek as necessary to the development of Latin. At one point, for example, he declared that “poetry was never perfected in Latin until by true imitation of the Grecians it was at length brought to perfection.”⁶⁹ It is against this backdrop that we can read Ascham’s bilingual diptych that commemorated the death of Sir Anthony Denny (in 1549), from which I include a small extract. The Greek version came first:

A.	Ἄγει με καὶ φέρει κακὸν θεήλατον.		
Ξ.	Τί λιμός;		
A.	Οὐκ.		
Ξ.	Ἦ λοιμός;		
A.		Οὐδαμῶς μὲν, οὐ.	5
Ξ.	Ἄλλ’ ἐστὶ πόλεμος;		
A.		Μὰ Δι’.	
Ξ.		Οὐ μείζον κακόν.	
A.	Πολὺ μείζον, ὡς φασίν, Προφήτης καὶ Πλάτων.		
Ξ.	Τί ποτε, τί ἐστ’;		
A.		Ὅταν μὲν ἐξαίρει Θεός	
	Τῆς γῆς ἄριστον ἄνδρα, φεῦ μεγέθους κακοῦ!		

⁶⁶ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 3, 225.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 177 (1568).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* vol. 3, 257.

Ξ. Ἐξείλε τίνα; ⁷⁰		
A.	Οἴμοι τάλαινα, οἴχεται	10
	Βέλτιστος ἀνδρῶν ὧν πόθ’ ἥλιος βλέπει	
	Ἀντώνιος Δεναῖος, Ἀγγλίας κλέος.	
ANG.	Graviter premit me coelitus missum malum.	
HOSP.	Famesne?	
ANG.	Minime.	
HOSP.	Pestis?	
ANG.	Haud illud quidem.	5
HOSP.	At Mars?	
ANG.	Nequaquam.	
HOSP.	Gravius his nullum est malum.	
ANG.	Ah gravius, ut Propheta memorat et Plato.	
HOSP.	Tandem quid est?	
ANG.	Quando optimos tollit Deus	
	Viros, id offensissimum arguit Deum.	
HOSP.	Quem sustulit?	
ANG.	Me miserum, eheu nuper perit	10
	Vir optimus, quos sol vidit, vir optimus,	
	Antonius Dennaecus, Angliae decus. ⁷¹	

Here we have a very vivid illustration of a Latin composition that springs directly from the Greek. The Latin form draws on and responds to the Greek literary convention of the funeral dialogue (*dialogus epitaphius*) which was inspired by the Attic custom of a yearly funeral oration (*logos epitaphios*) in praise of the city and those who had died in battle.⁷² Ascham’s Latin poem clearly attempts to remain faithful to the Greek, often even reproducing the word order, but at the same time selecting suitably idiomatic Latin phrasing and Roman reference points, such as “Mars” for *πόλεμος*. Yet “Plato and the prophet” is retained, as though symbolically transitioning into the realm of Latinity.⁷³ This exercise was not just about language manipulation but an opportunity to demonstrate the assimilation of Greek wisdom into Latin. As Ascham’s *The Scholemaster* highlighted, it was as much the Greek attitude of mind as the language that warranted close observance, and he also referred in *The Scholemaster* to Greece as a “commonwealth to emulate.”⁷⁴

⁷⁰ The printed version has Ἐξείλε τίνα, but this cannot be correct, and was almost certainly an accentual misunderstanding on the part of the printer, which has been rectified here.

⁷¹ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 3, 281–84. “ENG. A heaven-sent ill gravely oppresses me. / STR. A famine? / ENG. No. / STR. The plague? / ENG. No, not that. / STR. Then war? / ENG. Not at all. / STR. There’s no worse evil. / ENG. Oh yes, as the prophet and Plato tell us. / STR. Then what is it? / ENG. When God takes away the best of men, then He shows himself at his angriest. / STR. Whom has he taken away? / ENG. Woe is me, alas! Lately the best of those the sun looks down that has died, a fine man, Anthony Denny, the glory of England.” Trans. Sutton, *Philological Museum*.

⁷² Crown, “Ascham as Reader and Writer: Greek Sententiae and Neo-Latin Poetry,” 200.

⁷³ By “Prophet” Ascham almost certainly means Scripture.

⁷⁴ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 3, 134.

Given the oral and performative nature of the early modern period,⁷⁵ it is possible too that Ascham had in mind the issue of pronunciation. The terms *λιμός* (“famine”) and *λοιμός* (“plague”), as well as creating a pun in Ascham’s Greek poem quoted above,⁷⁶ would in fact crop up a few years later in a flurry of correspondence between Ascham and a group of scholars from the Low Countries. This correspondence centred on the different forms of pronunciation of Greek followed in England and on the continent, with Ascham promoting the newer Erasmian system, and the those from the Low Countries tending to cleave to a more conservative (itacist) articulation of Greek (namely, the tendency to pronounce many vowels as [i]). Naturally, this dispute about Greek pronunciation was conducted in a set of letters replete with code-switches.⁷⁷ In a letter to Ascham, Nicholas Cisner discussed whether the ancients were able to distinguish between *λιμός* and *λοιμός*.⁷⁸ These were then Greek words that fell within the ambit of such investigations, and it seems likely that Ascham, inspired by Thucydides, the Greek historian, who had done the same,⁷⁹ pondered the issue of their sound as he included them in his Greek poem. Furthermore, as Raf Van Rooy has suggested, knowing how to pronounce Greek was not unrelated to theories of the pronunciation of Latin, not least because Latin vocabulary possessed many Greek loanwords, but also because many humanists believed the two languages to be related.⁸⁰ And one can only speculate on the extent to which the principles of vowel / diphthong pronunciation in the terms *λιμός* and *λοιμός* were similarly in Ascham’s mind as he inscribed his Latin sister version.

It is clear from *The Scholemaster* and his other works that, for Ascham, a vital role model in this Latin–Greek synthesis was Cicero, an author commonly thought to be the supreme stylist,⁸¹ but one who was himself also heavily indebted to the Greeks. In his Latin letter to Sturm that accompanied *The Scholemaster*, Ascham sketched out Cicero’s approach to the Greek legacy, which points very immediately both to a linguistic hierarchy but also to the connection between purity of language and purity of behaviour:

Si vero optarem ipse fieri alter Cicero ... si ipse cuperem eo recte ire, quo Cicero ante felicissime pervenit, qua meliore via quam ipsis ipsius Ciceronis vestigiis insisterem? Habuit ille quidem Romae Gracchos, Crassos, Antonios, rarissima ad imitandum exempla: sed exempla alia ipse alias quaerit. ... Ille enim sermo non in Italia natus est, sed e Graecorum disciplina in Italiam traductus. Nec satis habuit Cicero, ut lingua eius proprietate domestica casta esset, et ornata; nisi mens etiam Graecorum eruditione prudens efficeretur, et docta. ... Itaque, cum ipsa lingua Latina, felicissimo suo tempore, in ipsa Roma, in ipso Cicerone,

⁷⁵ Richards, *Voices and Books*.

⁷⁶ A point which again suggests that Ascham started thinking from the Greek.

⁷⁷ For example: Ascham to Hubert of 1553 (344–49); Cisner to Ascham of 1553 (367–70), Hubert to Ascham of 1553 (373–77), all in Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.2.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 369 (1553).

⁷⁹ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 2.54.3, and also noted by Ascham in his personal copy of Thucydides at Shrewsbury School, 36. (And I thank Micha Lazarus for this detail).

⁸⁰ Van Rooy, *New Ancient Greek in a Neo-Latin World*, 13.

⁸¹ Albeit to various degrees: there were strict Ciceronians and more lenient, eclectic stylists like Erasmus.

ad summam perfectionem sine Graeca lingua non pervenit: cur quisquam in sola Latina quaerit, quod Cicero ipse absque Graeca non invenit?⁸²

A conspicuous manifestation of Cicero’s dedication to Greek learning was, of course, his own Latin–Greek code-switching within his Latin prose, especially his letters,⁸³ and it certainly behoves us to speculate on the degree to which the code-switching on display in Ascham’s output was a form of Ciceronian reflex. It is noteworthy that some of Ascham’s own code-switches were those that Cicero himself had used. We have already witnessed one such example in his above-mentioned letter to Cordingley.⁸⁴ Another can be found in a Latin letter to Redman.⁸⁵ Here Ascham deployed the phrase *πρὸς τοῦ συμφιλολογεῖν* (“to be engaged in common literary studies”), a Grecism almost certainly lifted from Cicero’s *Ad familiares*, “Tu velim in primis cures ut valeas, ut una *συμφιλολογεῖν* possimus.”⁸⁶

In some ways then it might be argued that code-switching could be viewed as an act of Ciceronian reception. Yet Ascham’s primary concerns were different to those of Cicero. For Ascham, the Christian faith, which Cicero of course did not know, was the overriding telos. In many ways, we should view Ascham’s perception of the commitment to Greek paradigms in the same light as his view of the Latin Bible’s relationship to the original Greek, God’s *λόγος*, which comprised not only word, voice and eloquence but also reasoning, and ultimately, *action*. It is certainly evident that Ascham viewed the contents of *The Scholemaster* as wholly germane to the broader matter of Christian conduct. In the preface to the work, he commented, “I have earnest respect to three special points: truth in religion, honesty in living and right order in learning.”⁸⁷ It was also clear that he considered the Greek authors that he included in *The Scholemaster* and the Roman writer, Cicero, whom he argued best embodied a Roman assimilation of Greek wisdom, eminently suitable adjuncts to Scripture. He wrote at one point, “He that will dwell in these few books only, first, in God’s holy Bible and then join it with Tully in Latin, Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, Isocrates and Demosthenes in Greek must needs prove an excellent man.”⁸⁸ To read the ancient Greek authors was to absorb an influence that could improve Christian *mores*. The sentiment was echoed across

⁸² Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 2, 181 (1568). “If truly I should desire to become another Cicero ... if I should wish to go straight to that point which Cicero arrived at most fruitfully before, by what better way could I advance than in Cicero’s own footsteps? Indeed, he had right at Rome, the Gracchi, Crassi, Antonii, rarest examples for imitation, but he sought other examples elsewhere. ... For his speech was not born in Italy, but was consigned to Italy from the discipline of the Greeks. Cicero was not satisfied that his tongue should be elegant and embellished by native propriety if his mind had not also profited wisely and learnedly by the erudition of the Greeks. ... And thus, since the Latin language itself came not to the highest perfection at a most happy time in Rome itself, in Cicero himself, without the Greek language, why should anyone seek from Latin alone what Cicero himself did not find without the aid of Greek?”

⁸³ See Elder and Mullen, *The language of Roman letters*.

⁸⁴ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.1, 9 (1539/40).

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 45 (1544).

⁸⁶ Cicero, *Letters to Friends*, 16.21.8. “I would wish that you would take care of your health first and foremost, so that we can be students together.”

⁸⁷ Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 3, 86.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 228.

his corpus, and one can find regular references to the literary triumvirate of Plato, Aristotle and Cicero, especially in conjunction with the Bible.⁸⁹

We can be in no doubt that for Ascham, and almost certainly for many other humanist reformers of his epoch, individuals including Philip Melancthon, Joachim Camerarius and Johannes Sturm, the Greek language was imbued with a sort of sacred power. It was for him a gift from on high, and a tongue that demanded the greatest respect not only for the learning but also the virtue it could inculcate. It was a language that might put a worshipper in greater proximity to the Almighty. Ascham constantly evangelized about the Greek language and its literature, and hoped for its widespread adoption in the education system at all levels and its patronage by the regime. Throughout his life, he was forever on the hunt for Greek books, once offering to pay a huge sum, some sixth month's salary, for any Greek volumes concerning "oratorum, philosophorum aut historicorum" ("oratory, philosophy or history") and principally for a book on the Greek orators.⁹⁰

During his 1550–53 trip to the continent, he also sent regular reports back to acquaintances about the Greek tomes he had encountered along the way. A code-switch in a letter he sent to Johannes Froben, the well-known Basle printer, in 1551, captures well the significance of the Greek tongue. In this dispatch, Ascham reported how he had seen the Fugger⁹¹ Greek library and assembled an inventory of its books, many of which have never been published, adding that this man's praise would be so much the greater if so many distinguished authors were presented to the world. By keeping them in "eternal darkness" (*in perpetuas tenebras*) Ascham declared Fugger a man who was no φιλολόγος ("lover of learning").⁹² The Greek code switch φιλολόγος was a potent reference point. It graphically served to combine Greek learning with the Word of God, serving as a sort of visual extension of the New Testament's Hellenic power, which, as we saw earlier, constituted such a priority in Ascham's faith-based outlook. Ascham here lamented the confinement of Greek materials in exactly the same terms that he and other reformers would the Gospels: Greek was the 'good news', the 'euangelion', the language that must be allowed to burst forth. In this Latin letter about books and resources, it is the Greek code-switch which is arguably the starting point. In Ascham's writing, when we encounter a Greek code-switch, we ought, even though the Greek phrasing has much more of a cameo role than the Latin that surrounds it, to

⁸⁹ For example: in a letter to Sturm of 1550, Ascham talks about reading Scriptures and joining to them Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes and Cicero (Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.1, 183); he refers in a letter to John Redman of 1544 to how the examination of God's Word is attended by the reading of Plato, Aristotle and Cicero, who are, as it were, "its attendant and handmaid" (*quasi ministra et ancilla*) (vol. 1.1, 45); and in a letter to William Cecil (in English) of 1553 (vol. 1.2, 350), Ascham describes being at St John's and keeping "company with the Bible, Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes and Tully." The unit of Plato, Aristotle and Cicero recurs throughout his letters almost like an incantation.

⁹⁰ To a friend at York, Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.1, 58 (1544). This would amount to ca. 20 shillings. "There is a Greek book which is called the *Ten Rhetoricians*, for it contains the orations of Aeschines, Lycurgus, Dinarchus and others."

⁹¹ The Fugger family were a prominent group of European bankers, several members of which cultivated strong humanist interests.

⁹² Giles, *Ascham*, vol. 1.2, 289 (1551).

direct our eyes first not at the Latin but at the Greek. This was the genesis from which the rest of the Latin flows: perhaps instead of ‘Latin–Greek code-switching’, the title of this special issue, we should adjust the order to ‘Greek–Latin’.

6 Conclusion

In this paper, I hope to have drawn attention, albeit in some small way through reference to the writings of a single individual, to some of the broader ramifications of code-switching. Greek could build accord and indicate and instil allegiance. It was a language that naturally slotted within pre-existing communities that were constructed around the generally acclaimed *lingua franca* of Europe, Latin. But for some, such as Ascham, its presence in Latin could ennoble and elevate the very Latinity in which it dwelt. It is revealing that Ascham never transliterated the Greek in his Latin–Greek code-switches, but always reproduced the original script. We can only assume that for an Hellenophile like Ascham, transliteration would have represented a form of subjugation. Use of the actual script signalled a deference to the classical Greek inheritance and its importance and even superiority over Latin. Greek also represented a commitment to linguistic, societal and cultural improvement. In this way it can be considered a sort of *philosophy*, for in the minds of individuals like Ascham, language was the outward expression of an inner condition. Most significantly of all, as Ascham would see it, Greek learning lay at the heart of his religious programme. During an epoch of such doctrinal flux, it was for him a guarantor of religious orthodoxy. But it was also a language that could put the Christian in direct contact with the Word of God, and it was essential to his life in faith. We tend to think of an engagement with the Greek language as an intellectual activity, which of course it was in many ways, but its use was also a deeply emotional one, as Ascham’s example demonstrates at the very least. In the early modern period, language—and especially Greek, treated by some as a sort of ur-language—was conceived of not just as a practical medium of communication, but rather as a form of divine speech and writing, an expression of the soul of the profoundest magnitude, the main function of which was, above all, the worship of, prayer to, and connection with God.

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